The Orthodox Church in the Arab World
700–1700

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An Anthology of Sources

Edited by
Samuel Noble and Alexander Treiger

Foreword by
Metropolitan Ephrem (Kyriakos)

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Foreword

This book offers you a testimony of the faith of the Orthodox Church in the Arab world in the historical period between 700 and 1700. It weaves together an anthology of many previously unpublished works, unknown in Arabic and even more so in English.

This is a good initiative by Samuel Noble and Dr. Alexander Treiger, who strive to show the entire world how much the Lord has spoken through the mouth of authors devoted to Him, amidst major historical events from the rise of Islam, through the Umayyad, ʿAbbasid, and Fatimid periods, the Crusaders, the Mongols, and the Mamluks, down to the Ottoman era.

All this bears witness to the fact that the Christian Church is nourished by the ongoing revelation of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Spirit who inspires and acts within individuals dedicating themselves to witnessing to the Truth—that Truth that became incarnate in Him who has overcome all kinds of death and corruption throughout human history: our Lord Jesus Christ. In both their life and their society, people of the Middle East can feel, in a great number of ways, the effects of this Truth, and so the Lord inspires those who love Him to find ways to express His ongoing presence and His continuous operation within human history.

It is true that in the period under discussion there were times of bloodshed and tragic historical events, and so these writings, published in the selections below, bear special witness to the ever-present Divine Light that shines forth through the tribulations of this world. The Arab Middle East remains a place where heavenly messages are heard, for the sake of human beings' salvation from temptations, sins, suffering, and ultimately from death. This fulfills the Lord's promise of granting us humans eternal life and taking us back into the everlasting presence of God which is realized within His creation from the very beginning.

This book is suitable for both the specialist and the general public. We ought to be thankful to Dr. Alexander Treiger and Samuel Noble who worked joyfully on publishing these rich selections from our holy Antiochian heritage. We ask God to reward their efforts and also encourage others to conduct similar research so that we can publish the

rest of our great heritage in the two languages, Arabic and English, at the very least.

With the blessing of the Lord Jesus our God and our Savior, who has come in the flesh.

Christmas 2012
+Ephrem (Kyriakos)
Metropolitan of Tripoli, al-Koura, and Dependencies

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Annunciation and Sunday of the Cross 2013
Samuel Noble and Alexander Treiger

The Orthodox Church in the Arab World
700–1700

Introduction

Samuel Noble and Alexander Treiger

Arab Christianity—A Neglected Area of Church History

The Middle East is the birthplace and the ancient heartland of Christianity, where the first Christian communities were founded by the apostles. On the eve of the Islamic conquests in the seventh century CE, Christians formed a majority or a plurality in most areas of the Middle East. They spoke and wrote a variety of languages, including Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, Middle Persian, and Sogdian. Arabic, too, was spoken by those Arab tribes and sedentary populations in Arabia, Palestine, Syria, and Iraq who had converted to the Christian faith in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries.

In the course of the seventh century, an estimated half of the world's Christians found themselves under Islamic rule.[1] The Islamic conquests set in motion two processes affecting these Christian communities: the process of Arabization, causing them gradually to adopt Arabic as a spoken, literary, and liturgical language (often alongside their ancestral tongues) and the much slower, yet persistent process of Islamization. To the degree that they underwent Arabization but not Islamization, Middle Eastern Christians are Arab Christians, though those of them who do not consider themselves to be of Arab descent, such as the Copts of Egypt or the Maronites of Lebanon, often reject the term.

Middle Eastern Christians successfully adapted to the new reality shaped by the Islamic conquests and developed new and unique ways of bearing witness to the Christian gospel in a culture largely defined by Islam. Though their proportion in the total population declined significantly over the centuries, Middle Eastern Christians in general and Arab Christians in particular have retained their cultural importance up to the present day.

Christian theological literature in Arabic is at least 1300 years old, the oldest surviving texts dating from the eighth century.[2] Pre-modern Arab Christian literature embraces such diverse genres as Arabic translations of

the Bible and the Church Fathers, Biblical commentaries, liturgical texts, lives of the saints, homilies, theological and polemical treatises, ascetical literature, devotional poetry, philosophy, medicine, history, and diaries, as well as archival documents that offer indispensable information on Arab Christian and Middle Eastern history.[3] As the catalogs of Christian publishers in Cairo and Beirut and now a plethora of Christian websites in Arabic clearly show, Arab Christian literature continues to flourish today.[4]

Despite all the above, in the Western historiography of Christianity, the Arab Christian Middle East is treated only peripherally, if at all. The popular assumption, current even among scholars of Christianity, is that in the wake of the Islamic conquests, Christianity abandoned the Middle East to flourish elsewhere, leaving its original heartland devoid of an indigenous Christian presence. To make things worse, the term "Arab" is widely—though needless to say incorrectly—regarded as synonymous with Muslim, and so even the very notion of Arab Christianity appears to many to be a contradiction in terms.

Even those Westerners who are aware of the existence of Arabic-speaking Christian communities—primarily through personal contacts with émigré Middle Eastern Christians living in the West—are rarely able to name even a single author or literary work from the Christian heritage in Arabic. This is hardly surprising, as virtually no such authors or works are mentioned in the standard histories of Christianity available to the Western reader and the existing translations of such texts are not easily accessible to nonspecialists. (The bibliography at the end of this anthology will offer a guide to these translations.)

To take just a few examples: though Middle Eastern and Arab Christianity would easily merit their own volume in such a detailed and otherwise excellent work as Jaroslav Pelikan's five-volume *The Christian Tradition*, all one finds is a number of scattered references to one or two Arabic-writing Christian theologians.[5]

Similarly, Kallistos Ware's *The Orthodox Church* simply remarks that after the Islamic conquests, "[t]he Byzantines lost their eastern possessions, and the three Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem passed under infidel control."[6] Little is said about the subsequent history of these patriarchates until they resurface again much later in the narrative, in the chapter devoted to the Orthodox Church in the twentieth century. Arab Orthodox Christians are referenced only once, in connection with the contemporary situation in the patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem.[7] Only one Arab Christian author from the preceding centuries is mentioned.[8] The chapter entitled "The Church under Islam" begins with the Ottoman conquest of Constanti-

nople in 1453, with not the slightest hint that three patriarchates had been under Islamic domination for more than eight centuries prior to that date.[9]

Even more recently, John McGuckin, in his monograph *The Orthodox Church* (2008), takes the position that "[a]fter the rise of Arab [read: Muslim] power in the seventh century, the once great Christian communities of Antioch and Alexandria fell into disastrous decline."[10] The reader is made to understand that the decline was so drastic and so disastrous that there is hardly any need to comment on these communities' subsequent fate.

The same neglect of Arab Christianity is evident also in McGuckin's recent two-volume *Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity* (2011). Though this encyclopedia features separate articles on Orthodoxy in Latvia and Orthodoxy in Lithuania, it has no comparable article on Orthodoxy in Lebanon. Sporadic references to Arab Orthodox Christianity are only found in entries on the patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem and in the entry on the "Syrian Orthodox Churches." The latter, however, somewhat confusingly reports that "[t]he Syrian Orthodox Christians, in the Byzantine sense (i.e., those that accept all seven ecumenical councils) . . . belong either to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East or the Antiochian Orthodox Church"[11]—despite the fact that the "Greek" Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch *is* the Antiochian Orthodox Church. There is not a single entry in the entire encyclopedia on any Arabic-writing Christian theologian.

It is only in recent years that surveys of Christianity in general and Orthodox Christianity in particular have begun to include chapters on the "Arabic tradition." Thus, Kenneth Parry's *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity* (2007) features a chapter on Arab Christianity, as does the volume *The Orthodox Christian World*, edited by Augustine Casiday (2012). Likewise, the *Cambridge History of Christianity* volume on "Early Medieval Christianities" (2008) features a general survey chapter on "Christians under Muslim Rule." This subject is taken up much more extensively in the German manual *Das orientalische Christentum* by Wolfgang Hage (2007) and in the excellent Russian study *Blizhnevostochnoe Pravoslavie pod Osmanskim vladychestvom* (Orthodox Christianity in the Middle East under Ottoman Rule) by Konstantin Panchenko (2012). The first monograph in English that attempts to do justice to the richness of the Arab Christian tradition while also being accessible to the general reader—Sidney Griffith's *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*—was published in 2008.[12]

These are hopeful signs for the future, yet much work remains to be done before this important aspect of Christian history can be fully appreciated. Close to 90 percent of the vast corpus of Arab Christian literature has not yet been edited or translated, let alone adequately studied. Numerous texts,

including documents of considerable importance, are unknown even to Arab Christians themselves, being buried in the manuscript repositories of Europe and the Middle East, while many others have been edited in Arabic but remain inaccessible to the English reader.

The present anthology—the first of its kind—intends to fill this important gap. It is the editors' hope that it will mark a step forward in correcting this deplorable Western myopia with regard to Arab Christianity by making accessible in English representative selections from major Arab Christian works, several of them previously unpublished, written during the millennium from 700 to 1700.

For the sake of consistency, this anthology focuses on one particular tradition among the many varieties of Middle Eastern Christianity (on which more below): what we shall term "Arab Orthodox Christianity."[13] Arab Orthodox Christians are those Arabic-speaking Christians who accept the definitions of the seven ecumenical councils (including the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon) and are in communion with the other Orthodox churches: the churches of Greece, Russia, Serbia, Romania, Georgia, and others. Traditionally, these Christians were called "Melkites" (literally "royalists") by their opponents, a term that implied that the Arab Orthodox were followers of the Byzantine emperor in matters of doctrine and ritual.[14] In Arabic, they are frequently called "Rum Orthodox": "Roman" (i.e., Byzantine-rite) Orthodox. In the West, they are often called "Antiochian Orthodox," due to the fact that the majority of their churches in North America are affiliated with the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.

It must be mentioned in this connection that even as Arabic came to predominate within the Middle Eastern Orthodox Christian community, Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic long remained in liturgical use in many regions,[15] while Greek, Georgian, and even Persian and Turkish were also employed in some times and places. Since, however, these languages lie outside the scope of this anthology, it is to a more detailed account of the history of the Arab Orthodox community—and of Arab Christianity in general—that we must now turn.

Arab Christianity before the Rise of Islam

Arabic was among the first languages in which the Gospel was preached. The Book of Acts mentions Arabs as being present at the first Pentecost in Jerusalem, where they heard the Christian message in their native tongue.[16] Not long thereafter, the Apostle Paul states that immediately after his con-

version he traveled to Arabia.[17] The term "Arabia" as used by Paul presumably refers to the Nabatean kingdom, centered in Petra in present-day Jordan. While ethnically Arab, the Nabateans had come to use Aramaic as they became sedentarized. In the early second century CE they were conquered by Rome and incorporated into the Roman Empire as the province of Arabia Petraea.[18] It is such sedentary Arameo-Arab groups that were the first Arabs to be exposed to, and to gradually embrace, Christianity.

Other than the people of Arabia referenced by Paul, one can mention the Arameo-Arab Abgarid dynasty of Edessa (present-day Urfa in Turkey). According to some early Christian sources (e.g., the fourth-century Church historian Eusebius of Caesaria and the fifth-century Syriac text *The Doctrine of Addai*), King Abgar V the Black (d. 50 CE) was converted to Christianity by the Apostle Addai, thus becoming the first Christian king.[19] Scholars have disputed the historicity of this information and the identity of the Abgar in the story, sometimes attempting to equate him, instead, with Abgar VIII the Great (d. 212). Whatever the identity of the king who converted to Christianity, it is undeniable that the Abgarid dynasty of Edessa was early on favorable to, or at least tolerant of, Christianity and that the new faith had gained acceptance in the city by the end of the second century CE.[20]

The spread of Christianity to Arabic-speaking nomads and semi-nomads soon followed.[21] The chief areas of the Arabian Peninsula to have had a significant Christian population were the southern Arabian city of Najran (near the modern border between Saudi Arabia and Yemen), the northeast edge of the peninsula (especially the city of al-Hira near modern Kufa in Iraq and the coastal region of Qatar), and the desert areas bordering Byzantine Syria and Palestine. It is in this last region in the fourth century CE that the Byzantines began to recruit semi-nomadic Arab tribes to secure the porous border region from incursions from the desert. As part of this arrangement, the Arabs allied with Byzantium were required to convert to Christianity. It would appear that these new converts quickly became zealous for the Nicene Orthodoxy they had received: when the emperor Valens (r. 364–78) attempted to enforce Arianism as the creed of the Empire, these Arab *foederati*, led by their queen Mavia, revolted against his rule and successfully demanded that a pro-Nicene Arab hermit named Moses be ordained their bishop.[22] Writing in the fifth century CE, the church historian Sozomen claims to have heard odes composed in Arabic that celebrated Mavia's victory over Valens. Not only is this the earliest account of Arabic poetry, it is also the earliest account of an oral Christian literature in Arabic.[23]

In the fifth century the relative unity of the Christian world was shattered by intense controversies over Christology. These controversies came to define

the communal and theological identities of Arabic-speaking Christians both before and after the rise of Islam. The first stage of the controversy centered on the debate between the patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius (d. 451) and the patriarch of Alexandria, Cyril (d. 444). A pupil of Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428), Nestorius was educated in the Antiochene tradition of theology and scriptural exegesis. This tradition emphasized the distinction between the divinity and the humanity of Christ and rejected theopaschite expressions (i.e., language ascribing "suffering" to God). Nestorius declared, therefore, that the Virgin Mary ought to be called "Christotokos" (Birthgiver of Christ) rather than "Theotokos" (Birthgiver of God) because birth could not be properly ascribed to God and hence Mary gave birth only to Christ's humanity. The leader of the opposition to Nestorius was Cyril, whose native Alexandrian school of theology and exegesis emphasized, by contrast, the unity between the divinity and the humanity in Christ, stressed the identity of Christ with the pre-eternal God the Word, and endorsed theopaschite language. This controversy came to a head at the Council of Ephesus of 431, which deposed and exiled Nestorius and canonized the title Theotokos.

While it is considered the Third Ecumenical Council by Eastern Orthodox Christians, the Council of Ephesus was rejected by many Christians in Syria and Mesopotamia, who were faithful to their Antiochene theological identity. Thus, the church of the Sasanian Empire, headed by the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, rejected the condemnation of Nestorius. Its Council of Seleucia-Ctesiphon of 486 elevated Theodore of Mopsuestia's exegetical works to the level of official dogma and accepted a Christological definition that ruled out all theopaschite expressions (including the term "Theotokos"), while safeguarding the unity of the person of Christ on the basis of a "prosopic" rather than "hypostatic" union of divinity and humanity.[24] While this church officially referred to itself as the Church of the East, it was soon called "Nestorian" because of its Christological teachings.[25] Because of its independence from the imperial church in Byzantium, the Persian rulers accepted the Church of the East as the only legal variety of Christianity within the Sasanian Empire and allowed it the freedom to proselytize anyone except ethnic Persians, who were required to follow the official Zoroastrianism of the state.

The second divisive controversy erupted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, considered the Fourth Ecumenical Council by Eastern Orthodox Christians. Inspired by Pope Leo I's *Tome* of 449, the council affirmed that after the Incarnation Christ is confessed "in two natures," divine and human. This affirmation of two natures in Christ was criticized by the more radical followers of Cyril as a concession to the Nestorians. These uncom-

promising Cyrillians insisted instead on "one nature of God the Word incarnate" (an originally Apollinarian formula used by Cyril) and consequently rejected the Council of Chalcedon. They were henceforth called monophysites by their opponents and are today less polemically called Miaphysites (from the Greek *mia physis*, one nature).

Opposition to Chalcedon was particularly strong in Syria and Egypt. In Syria the sixth-century bishop Jacob Baradaeus (ca. 500–78) founded a Miaphysite hierarchy independent from the imperial Chalcedonian church. His followers were soon called "Jacobites" by their opponents.[26] In Egypt, after the council of Chalcedon, Chalcedonian and Miaphysite bishops alternated. Two separate hierarchies eventually emerged in the sixth century, beginning in 537–38 when the emperor Justinian (r. 527–65) consecrated a second, Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria, Paul, as rival to the reigning Miaphysite patriarch, Theodosius. In 576, when the Miaphysite patriarch Peter IV ordained approximately seventy bishops, the process of creating two separate hierarchies—the Chalcedonian and the Miaphysite (later to be called, respectively, "Melkite" and "Coptic")—was essentially complete.[27]

In the wake of Chalcedon, the Miaphysite church proved to be extremely successful among the Arabs. The major Byzantine allies during the sixth century, the Arab tribe of Banu Ghassan (Ghassanids), were won over to the Miaphysite cause even though they remained politically loyal to Constantinople. It is in fact the Ghassanid ruler al-Harith ibn Jabala (d. 569) who was operative in the ordination of Jacob Baradaeus as bishop.[28]

Another important Christian center in the Arab world, the southern Arabian city of Najran (mentioned above) was largely brought within the Miaphysite orbit through its close connection to Ethiopia. In the year 523, the Yemenite king Yusuf Dhu Nuwas, who had converted to Judaism, began a persecution of the Christians of Najran.[29] Several hundred Christians, including their leader al-Harith (in Greek, Arethas; not to be confused with al-Harith ibn Jabala mentioned above) were martyred.[30] Provoked by the deaths of these Christians, the Ethiopian king Kaleb invaded and conquered Najran.[31] After several years of direct Ethiopian rule, the viceroy Abraha declared himself king of southern Arabia, building a cathedral in Sanaʿa (Yemen).[32] Around the year 570 he attempted to invade the important trade city of western Arabia, Mecca, with an Ethiopian army that included war elephants. The defeat of this army was later remembered in the Qurʾan in the "Chapter of the Elephant" (*Surat al-Fil*).[33]

At the same time, the Church of the East was able to expand its influence among the Arabs of northeastern Arabia, especially among the ruling tribe of Banu Lakhm (Lakhmids) in the city of al-Hira on the lower Euphrates,

near present-day Kufa in Iraq. The Lakhmids functioned as a Persian client state, protecting the Sasanian Empire from Arab incursions in much the same way that the Ghassanids served to protect the Byzantines. A bishopric of al-Hira seems to have existed from at least 410. By virtue of their high urban culture, the Christians of al-Hira, coming from a variety of tribal backgrounds, were seen by the nomads of the peninsula as a distinct group and were known as the "ʿIbad," a term meaning "servants" (of Christ).[34]

Even before the official conversion of the Lakhmid king al-Nuʿman ibn Mundhir (r. 583–ca. 602) to Nestorian Christianity towards the end of the sixth century, al-Hira was a thriving Arab Christian cultural and political center. The poetry of the sixth-century Arab Christian poet from al-Hira ʿAdi ibn Zayd (d. ca. 600), for example, has many Christian motifs, including a fine retelling of the Biblical story of the creation of the world and the Fall in Arabic verse.[35]

Later Muslim historians and geographers mention al-Hira's several churches and monasteries, some of which were built by the Lakhmid Christian queen Hind (mid-sixth century). One of these monasteries, called "The Monastery of Hind" (Dayr Hind) after its benefactress, remained active well into the Islamic period. An Arabic-language inscription that was once located over the door of this monastery's church attests to the importance of this Arab Christian queen:

> Hind, daughter of al-Harith son of ʿAmr son of Hujr, the queen, daughter of kings, mother of the king ʿAmr son of al-Mundhir, handmaiden of Christ, mother of His servant and handmaiden of His servant, built this church in the time of the King of Kings Khosrau Anushirvan and the bishop Ephrem. May the God for whom she built this church forgive her sins, have mercy on her and her son, accept their prayers, and raise them up for the establishment of truth. May God be with her and with her son unto ages of ages.[36]

Although al-Hira was eclipsed by the new garrison city of Kufa soon after the Islamic conquest, it did remain for some time a center of Arab Christian culture: the famous Christian translator of Greek texts into Syriac and Arabic, Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d. 873 or 877), was born and received his earliest education there. Nestorian Christianity was also prominent in the coastal area of Qatar (in Syriac: Beth Qatraye), along the western shore of the Persian Gulf, and in recent decades archeologists have uncovered the remains of a number of monasteries in that area. The famous seventh-century East-Syriac ascetic writer Isaac the Syrian was originally from that region.[37]

Given the strong Christian presence among the Arabs in the northern

and southern edges of the Arabian Peninsula, going back to at least two centuries before Islam, it is an important question whether there also existed pre-Islamic Arabic translations of the Bible and of the Christian liturgy. So far this question is unresolved, and evidence for such translations remains inconclusive. One likely reason for this is the strongly oral nature of pre-Islamic Arab culture. Although we know of a very elaborate poetic tradition among the Arabs in pre-Islamic times (the Arab Christian poet ʿAdi ibn Zayd from al-Hira has already been mentioned above), this poetry seems to have been composed and initially transmitted orally and was only written down some two centuries after the rise of Islam. Though the Arabs had an alphabet before Islam, the only pre-Islamic Christian examples of its use are graffiti and inscriptions such as the one at Dayr Hind. Thus, while it seems probable that the Christian scriptures would have been conveyed in Arabic before Islam, it is likely that they were transmitted orally; hence the dearth of evidence for their existence.[38]

Yet another unresolved issue relating to pre-Islamic Arab Christian literature is what influence such a literature, whether written or more likely oral, had on subsequent Christian literature in Arabic. One can hope that future research will shine light on this question.

Arab Christianity during the Lifetime of Muhammad

The founder of Islam, Muhammad, was born in Mecca to the Arab tribe of Quraysh in 570—the year of Abraha's unsuccessful siege of the city, called the "Year of the Elephant" in the Muslim sources. Orphaned at a young age, he was raised first by his grandfather and after the latter's death by his uncle. According to the Muslim tradition, at the age of nine or twelve while accompanying his uncle's caravan and passing through the city of Bosra in Syria, Muhammad met a Christian hermit named Bahira who reportedly predicted Muhammad's future prophetic career. It is interesting to note that there exists a highly polemical Christian "counterversion" of this encounter, preserved in both Syriac and Arabic. The Christian legend treats Bahira as a heretical monk who taught Muhammad the Qurʾan: "Muhammad was a humble boy, cheerful, good-natured, clever and eager to learn," the Christian legend patronizingly claims. "He accepted Bahira's teaching and observed it, and he came to Bahira day and night, until the Qurʾan was written. He continued to visit Bahira frequently, sought his advice in his affairs and followed it."[39]

The Muslim understanding of the Qurʾan's origins is, of course, quite different. The Qurʾan is seen as the word of God revealed piecemeal to

Muhammad through the mediation of the angel Jibril (Gabriel) over the last twenty-two years of his life (610–32). The Muslim tradition claims that Muhammad was initially frightened by the Qurʾanic revelation and was not sure whether it could be trusted, until his first wife's cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal, who is said to have been a Christian well versed in the scriptures, reassured him of the Qurʾan's divine origin. As in Bahira's case, we can see how the Muslim tradition uses Waraqa's image for the apologetic purpose of having a Christian confirm Muhammad's prophethood. The fact that Muslim historians deemed it plausible that a relative of the founder of Islam would have been a Christian is further testimony to the appeal that Christianity held even for the Arabs of Mecca.[40]

Thus Islam's holy book, the Qurʾan, was composed in an environment to a significant degree familiar with Christians and Christianity. It frequently addresses them directly or makes reference to them by the name "al-Nasara" (Nazarenes) or, on one occasion, "Ahl al-Injil" (the People of the Gospel). While some earlier scholarship, now outdated, attempted to identify the Christians addressed in the Qurʾan with various heretical groups (e.g., the Collyridians who worshipped the Virgin Mary as one of the Trinity), the current consensus is that the Qurʾan's Christians belonged to the same divisions of Middle Eastern Christianity that exist today, especially the Jacobites and Nestorians.[41] More recent research has highlighted the degree of familiarity with Biblical texts that the Qurʾan assumes among its audience.[42]

The Qurʾanic view of Christians is complicated and contains a number of elements. Alongside Jews and the so-called Sabians (usually identified by modern scholars with the Mandeans), the Qurʾan considers Christians to be "People of the Book," distinguishing them, in virtue of their possession of written scriptures, from polytheistic pagans. It goes even further with regard to Christians, stating that they are "closer in affection" to the Muslims "because they have priests and monks among them and they are not arrogant,"[43] while at the same time it is more critical regarding the specifics of Christian belief. Central to the Qurʾan's understanding of God's unity (*tawhid*) is a rejection of the Christian belief in the Trinity.[44] This is expressed most pointedly in Sura 112, which states that "God is one, God the Supreme.[45] He does not beget and is not begotten. There is no one equal to Him."

The Qurʾan adopts elements of the Christian understanding of Jesus while strenuously denying other aspects. While it frequently refers to Jesus as the Messiah or Christ (*al-Masih*) and goes so far as to say that he is "God's word, which He cast upon Mary" and "a spirit from God,"[46] who was born of a virgin,[47] performed miracles, and was "supported" by the holy spirit,[48] it states also that Jesus is merely one in the line of prophets and

messengers and can in no way be considered to be God's Son. Moreover, it claims that Jesus was not crucified, but it only "appeared" so, while in reality "God lifted him up" to heaven.[49]

Arab Christians and the Muslim Conquest of the Middle East

While the Muslims were initially a persecuted minority in predominantly polytheist Mecca, they quickly reestablished themselves as a closely knit community in Yathrib (Medina) after moving to that city in 622, an event known as the Hijra. From Yathrib, they were able not only to fend off the polytheist Meccans' attacks but also to gain control over the entire Arabian Peninsula, including Mecca, during Muhammad's lifetime. After Muhammad's death in 632, under the rule of his immediate successors, the so-called "rightly-guided caliphs," the Muslim armies advanced swiftly through the Middle East and North Africa, dealing a death blow to the Sasanian Empire and conquering Byzantium's richest provinces: Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Weakened by continuous warfare between the Sasanians and the Byzantines, the major cities of the Middle East, all with significant Christian populations, surrendered in rapid succession: Damascus fell in 635; Seleucia-Ctesiphon, Antioch, and Jerusalem in 637; Alexandria in 642.[50]

Later Christian and Muslim traditions would tell the story of an encounter between the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius (d. 638 or 639), a close associate of John Moschus and Maximus the Confessor, and the second Muslim caliph ʿUmar (d. 644).[51] Laying siege to Jerusalem, after two years of ravaging the nearby countryside, the Muslim general Abu ʿUbayda ibn al-Jarrah offered the city the three standard alternatives: conversion to Islam, surrender and payment of taxes, or destruction of the city. The Byzantine army had essentially abandoned Palestine after its defeat at the Battle of Yarmuk in 636 and so, as in Damascus and later Alexandria, the responsibility for negotiating with the invaders fell to the bishop of the city. As conversion to Islam (a completely unknown faith at that time) was inconceivable and military resistance to the Muslims in the absence of a Byzantine army posed too great a risk, Sophronius decided to surrender the city—but only to the Caliph ʿUmar personally. ʿUmar ceremonially rode into Jerusalem on a camel in February 638 and made camp on the Mount of Olives. It was there that Sophronius met with him to hand him the keys to the Holy City.

It is only in the history of the tenth century Arab Orthodox patriarch of Alexandria, Eutychius (Saʿid ibn Batriq, r. 935–40) that the most famous

detail would be added as an embellishment to the story, apparently designed to strengthen the local Christians' claim to protection of their holy sites. According to Eutychius, when the city had formally surrendered and ʿUmar entered the walls of Jerusalem, he was led by Sophronius to the Church of the Resurrection (the Holy Sepulchre). Inside the church, ʿUmar announced to Sophronius that he desired to pray, and Sophronius had some mats brought out so he could do this. But ʿUmar refused to pray in the church, pointing out that if he were to do so his followers would use it as a pretext for turning the church into a mosque. Instead, he prayed on the steps of the church and signed a charter prohibiting Muslims from holding communal prayer and sounding the Muslim *adhan* (call for prayer) in the proximity of the church.[52] Eutychius (or his source) complains, however, that in "his time" ʿUmar's protection charter had been violated and the Muslims had taken over a part of the gallery of the church, building a mosque there and calling it the Mosque of ʿUmar.[53]

In modern times it has become commonplace to portray Miaphysite Christians, who dissented from the official Byzantine Christology, as welcoming the transition to Muslim rule. Though this may be partially true for Egypt (we hear, for instance, that the Coptic patriarch Benjamin encouraged the Coptic population of Pelusium—now Tell al-Farama, in the Nile delta—to support the invaders),[54] there is no evidence of comparable activities or sympathies among the Miaphysites of Syria.[55] Moreover, even in Egypt, opposition to Chalcedonian Christology did not necessarily translate to opposition to Byzantine rule, let alone support for the Muslim invasion. Even one of the most vehemently anti-Byzantine authors of the time—the seventh-century Coptic historian John of Nikiu, who argues that the Muslim conquest of Egypt was brought about by the emperor Heraclius's persecution of the Miaphysites—still makes clear that he has no sympathies for the Muslims. He condemns, in no uncertain terms, those "false Christians" who collaborate with the invaders, convert to Islam, and then fight their former co-religionists.[56] The earliest Miaphysite literary responses to the conquest in *both* Syria and Egypt take the form of apocalypses that portray the arrival of the Muslims as a catastrophe presaging the end of times.[57]

The three earliest Orthodox authors to mention Islam and the conquests, Sophronius of Jerusalem, Maximus the Confessor (d. 662), and Anastasius of Sinai (d. ca. 700), also reacted strongly against the Muslim invaders. In his *Synodical Letter* and *Christmas Sermon* of 634 and in his *Baptismal Sermon*, delivered at Epiphany, probably in 637, Sophronius reflects the progressive terror that gripped the residents of Jerusalem as the "Saracene invaders" approached the city and laid waste to surrounding areas.[58] Simi-

larly, in a letter written between 634 and 639, Maximus describes the Muslim invaders of Egypt as "a barbarian tribe from the desert sweeping over other people's land as their own" and laments that "a civilized country is being devoured by wild and untamable beasts, human only in appearance."[59] Writing some fifty years later, Anastasius of Sinai appears to have traveled extensively through the territory of the caliphate, defending Orthodoxy both against Christological heresy and the new theological threat posed by Islam. In his *Narrationes*, Anastasius even goes so far as to call Muslims "associates of the demons" and responds to the Muslim confession of faith, the *shahada*, with the proclamation "there is no God but the God of the Christians."[60] At roughly the same time, an anonymous seventh-century appendix to John Moschus's *Spiritual Meadow*, preserved only in Georgian, refers in the harshest terms to the construction of a mosque on Jerusalem's "Capitol" (the Temple Mount) and urges Christians not to collaborate with the Saracen settlers.[61]

In many respects the Muslim conquests had immediate effects on the lives of the conquered populations. Having enjoyed a position of power for three centuries, Christians suddenly found themselves, alongside Jews, with a new, second-class legal status as "subject peoples" ("*ahl al-dhimma*" or *"dhimmis"*). In exchange for the payment of a head tax (the *jizya*) and submission to a number of other restrictions,[62] they were granted permission to organize their religious communities on autonomous lines and were exempted (indeed, forbidden) from military service. This arrangement, however, initially applied only to Christians who were *not* Arabs. The Muslim conquerors seem to have been considerably less tolerant of *Arab* Christian tribes. According to one report, the caliph ʿUmar insisted that they should be fought until they converted to Islam or died. When he eventually agreed to impose on the Arab Christians from the tribe of Taghlib conditions of surrender, he specifically prohibited them from baptizing their children (a prohibition they later disregarded); at the same time, he acceded to their request to pay a different and less humiliating kind of tax than the *jizya*.[63]

Another crucial change that affected the Orthodox Christian populations of the Middle East, now subjects of the Muslim caliphate, was that they were separated from Byzantine territory and had difficulty maintaining ties with their co-religionists in the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Instead, they found themselves for the first time within a single polity that also included Christians living to the east of the Euphrates, in former Sasanian lands. Whereas the Byzantine government had favored the Orthodox and the Sasanian government had shown preference to the Church of the East, under the early Muslim rule all Christians—Orthodox, Miaphysite, and Nestorian—were to

have equal status as dhimmis.[64] This unprecedented situation brought about new forms of competition and interaction between the various Christian communities, who, along with the Muslims, would all gradually come to adopt Arabic as their principal language of cultural and intellectual discourse. In this environment intra-Christian polemic, written mostly in Arabic and focused especially on Christological issues, became a major literary genre. Despite this intra-Christian polemic, however, Christians freely exchanged ideas across Christological divisions as they endeavored to defend their shared faith against Muslim attacks.

In other respects, however, after the initial shock and chaos of the conquest, the subsequent period was marked by a high degree of social and cultural continuity with the Byzantine era, and the archaeological evidence in particular shows few signs of wide-scale devastation and disruption of the patterns of life in the seventh century, contrary to what one might expect from literary sources.[65] The policy of Muhammad's four immediate successors, the so-called "rightly-guided caliphs," toward the Christians seems to have been limited to expelling them from Arabia (in accordance with Muhammad's injunction that "no two religions shall coexist in the Arabian Peninsula") and enforcing the conditions of surrender on dhimmi populations in the newly acquired territories. The Muslim conquerors consciously retained the status of a separate military caste, preferring to live apart from the conquered populations in newly built garrison cities (*amsar*) such as Basra and Kufa in Iraq (both founded in the late 630s), rather than in old cities like al-Hira, where the influence of the pre-Islamic elites was still predominant.

Arab Orthodox under the Umayyads

In the year 661 the fourth caliph, ʿAli (r. 656–61), was assassinated by a Muslim rebel, and governance of the Muslim community was seized by his rivals, the Umayyad family, a branch of the Arab tribe of Quraysh living in Syria. The resulting transfer of the capital to Damascus was initially beneficial to the Orthodox Christians of Syria and Palestine, at least in terms of providing them with an opportunity to maintain their elite status. While the first four caliphs had attempted to rule from the far-off Medina (and in the case of ʿAli, from Kufa in Iraq) and were largely preoccupied by the conquest of new territory as well as rebellions and civil war among the Muslims, Umayyad rule gradually brought about a period of relative political stability during which the new rulers could develop their institutions of governance. Initially, the Umayyads maintained the Byzantine administrative system and even for a time kept Greek as the language of bureaucracy.[66] This meant that

Orthodox Christians with knowledge of Greek coming from families such as that of John of Damascus, which had been previously employed by the Byzantines, were able to keep their social prestige and influence by serving in the Umayyad administration.

However, already the caliphs ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 685–705) and his son al-Walid (r. 705–15) took measures to promote Arabic and Islam and to curb Christianity's influence in the Islamic empire. The most significant of these measures was the adoption of Arabic under ʿAbd al-Malik as the official language of the administration. In addition, these two caliphs made the first significant efforts to claim the "public space" for Islam. In Jerusalem ʿAbd al-Malik ordered the construction of the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount. Designed to rival the Christian monuments of the city, especially the Church of the Resurrection (the Holy Sepulchre), it was decorated with Qurʾanic and Qurʾan-style verses that criticized the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation.[67] In Damascus al-Walid demolished the Orthodox Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist, which had previously incorporated designated worship spaces for both Christians and Muslims, and converted the space into the Umayyad Mosque.[68] During the construction of the mosque, the head of John the Baptist was reportedly found in a crypt beneath the former cathedral. On al-Walid's orders it was reinterred, and a special column was erected in the mosque to mark its place. Until this day the Umayyad Mosque houses a shrine of John the Baptist (Yahya ibn Zakariyya), whom the Muslims revere as one of the prophets. Byzantine architects and craftsmen were employed in the construction of both the Dome of the Rock and the Umayyad Mosque, adding a layer of architectural continuity with the Byzantine period, even as the buildings themselves sought to marginalize Christianity and assert the dominance of Islam.

Usually attributed to the caliph ʿUmar II (r. 717–20), though sometimes associated with the earlier ʿUmar (r. 634–44), the so-called "Pact of ʿUmar" laid out the specific restrictions by which Christians were obligated to abide in order to maintain their "protected" status as dhimmis.[69] Many of these restrictions also aimed at curbing Christianity's presence in the public sphere, while others sought to humiliate Christians and mark them as separate from, and inferior to, Muslims. In addition to the requirement of paying the *jizya*, already mentioned above, the "Pact" also forbade Christians from building new churches or repairing old ones. Christians were not allowed to proselytize Muslims or even to attempt to dissuade family members—including spouses and next-of-kin—from converting to Islam. They could not teach their children the Qurʾan or imitate the Muslims' clothing, speech, or behavior. They were forbidden from riding horses or carrying swords and were required to wear distinctive dress, including a special belt called

the *zunnar* (from the Greek *zonarion*). Even if not consistently enforced by the Muslim authorities, these restrictions delineated the behavior expected of Christians in the minds of many Muslim jurists, as well as the populace. Several rulers, however, such as the ʿAbbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–61) and the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim (r. 996–1021), attempted to enforce the letter of the "Pact" with great brutality.[70] Even in modern times the "Pact" is used as the ultimate justification for restrictions on the building and repair of churches still enforced in a number of Muslim-majority countries, including Egypt.

Further radical measures aiming at curtailing Christianity's public presence were taken by the Umayyad caliph Yazid II (r. 720–4), who issued a decree forbidding the public display of crosses and icons and calling for their destruction.[71] Possibly in response to this edict, and to Muslim iconophobic attitudes more generally, local Christians in Transjordan protected their churches by shifting around the tessarae of their floor mosaics so as to eliminate human faces and animal figures and replace them with floral and geometric ornamentation.[72] While Yazid II's anti-Christian decree was short-lived within Muslim territory, it may have had an impact on the beginnings of iconoclasm within the Byzantine Empire.[73]

The issues faced by Orthodox Christians living in Syria and Palestine under Umayyad rule are best illustrated by the life and works of John of Damascus. Born into a local Greek-educated Damascene family of Arab or Aramaean background (his Arabic given name is Mansur ibn Sarjun) with a tradition of service in the imperial administration, John followed his family's tradition and worked as a senior official in the Umayyad treasury. Possibly because of the shift from Greek to Arabic in the administrative apparatus and ensuing changes in the personnel, John left his post and joined one of the monasteries of Palestine, traditionally said to be the famous lavra of Saint Sabbas (Mar Saba). At that time, the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, under the leadership of patriarch John V (r. 706–35), was consolidating itself after the devastations wrought by the Persian and Muslim invasions.[74] With its important monasteries and a strong tradition of loyalty to Chalcedonian Orthodoxy, Jerusalem became the natural center of Orthodox Christianity in Muslim lands. Jerusalem's prestige was also due to the role played by its patriarchs and monks in opposing monotheletism in the seventh century, which had been initially promoted by the imperial church in Byzantium.[75]

Originating from the heart of Orthodoxy within the caliphate, John's writings and hymns first spread among the Orthodox Christians in the Muslim lands, while gaining acceptance in Byzantium only later on, well after the author's lifetime. It is likely, therefore, that in his writings John was

much more concerned with the plight of Christians under Muslim rule than with the situation in far-off Byzantium.[76] While he was certainly aware of iconoclasm in the Byzantine Empire, it is primarily his personal experience of Yazid II's iconoclasm and the apologetic need to counter Muslim accusations of idolatry that motivated his celebrated defense of the icons.[77]

Likewise, John's dogmatic works reflect the sectarian milieu of Umayyad Syria. The heresies that he devotes the most attention to refuting—Monophysitism, Nestorianism, Manichaeism, and Messalianism—were at that time all active in Syria but were less immediately relevant to Byzantium.[78] In his defense of Orthodox Christology, John sought to clarify Orthodox dogma through a precise explanation of technical terms within an Aristotelian framework, a trend already evident half a century earlier in Anastasius of Sinai's *Hodegos*.[79] This trend would later continue in Arab Christian literature and would become the major form of polemical discourse between the rival Christian groups, as well as of Christian polemic against the Muslims.

Chapter 100 of John's *On Heresies* and the (apparently spurious) *Dialogue between a Saracen and a Christian* represent the earliest direct Orthodox Christian responses to Islam. These works demonstrate firsthand knowledge of Islam and of several passages from the Qurʾan.[80] Significantly, during John's lifetime, Damascus was the center of the early attempts at forging a rationalist Islamic theology, *kalam*, especially focused on the debate between proponents of determinism and partisans of free will. A number of scholars have attempted to identify John's influence among those Muslims who argued for free will,[81] while others have seen parallels between John's apologetic theology in the *Fount of Knowledge* and the methodology of early Islamic apologetic theological reflection.[82]

John of Damascus was by no means the only significant Orthodox Christian figure writing in Greek while living under Islamic rule in the eighth century, a time of relatively insignificant literary production in Byzantium. Andrew of Crete (d. ca. 740) and Cosmas of Maiuma (d. c. 752)—both of whom, together with John of Damascus himself, were famous for their contributions to Orthodox Christian hymnography—are also associated with the monastic milieu of Palestine in the Umayyad period.[83]

ʿAbbasid Rule and the Birth of Arab Christian Literature

The Umayyads were not descendants of the immediate family of Muhammad and therefore were constantly haunted by doubts over the legitimacy of their rule over the Muslim community. In the year 750 they were swept

away by a revolution begun in the eastern Iranian province of Khorasan in the name of descendants of Muhammad's uncle ʿAbbas. The ʿAbbasid revolution ushered in significant changes in Islamic society and thus greatly impacted the situation of Christians living under Muslim rule. In 762 the seat of the caliphate was transferred from Damascus to the newly founded city of Baghdad, built in the vicinity of the old Sasanian capital Seleucia-Ctesiphon. This change reflected a transition from Byzantine to Iranian models in court life and administration and from Bedouin Arab to Persian models in literary culture. It proved most beneficial for the Nestorian Christians, whose church was centered in Iraq and who were quick to move their patriarchal see from Seleucia-Ctesiphon to Baghdad. With their demographic predominance in Iraq and their catholicos' easy access to the caliphal court, the Nestorians were able, at least unofficially, to regain something of the status they had held under the Sasanians prior to the Muslim conquest.[84]

In the caliphate's new capital, Christians of all communities were able to maintain a significant degree of social prestige. According to the famous ninth-century Muslim litterateur al-Jahiz (d. 868 or 869), many Christians in Baghdad were relatively well-off and were employed as "secretaries to the government, attendants of kings, doctors to the nobility, sellers of perfume, and financiers."[85] At the same time, Christian intellectuals made indelible contributions to the burgeoning philosophical and scientific culture of ʿAbbasid Baghdad as translators of Greek and Syriac philosophical, scientific, and medical works into Arabic.[86]

The sheer volume of their translation activity is startling. As summarized by Dimitri Gutas, it encompassed "astronomy and alchemy and the rest of the occult sciences; the subjects of the quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and theory of music; the entire field of Aristotelian philosophy throughout its history: metaphysics, ethics, physics, zoology, botany, and especially logic—the *Organon*; all the health sciences: medicine, pharmacology, and veterinary science; and various other marginal genres of writings, such as Byzantine handbooks on military science (the *tactica*), popular collections of wisdom sayings, and even books on falconry."[87] Though the majority of the translators were Nestorians, one can also mention a number of Arabic- and Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians: Yahya ibn al-Bitriq,[88] Qusta ibn Luqa, Istifan ibn Basil, Nazif ibn Yumn, and possibly also ʿAbd al-Masih ibn Naʿima al-Himsi, the author of an influential Arabic adaptation of Plotinus's *Enneads*, known as the *Theology of Aristotle*.[89] In addition to their work as translators, both Qusta ibn Luqa and Nazif ibn Yumn were authors of theological treatises that expressed Orthodox theological beliefs in the philosophical language of their day.[90]

Less fortunately for the Christians, the ʿAbbasids instituted a new conversion policy radically different from that of the Umayyads. They were the first Muslim rulers to encourage conversions of non-Arabs to Islam, abolishing the requirement that non-Arab converts should become affiliated with an Arab tribe. This resulted in a dramatic surge in the rate of conversions, reflected in contemporary sources.[91] Thus, the West-Syriac *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, written ca. 775 in the region of Tur ʿAbdin (present-day southeastern Turkey), reports group conversions of entire villages.

> The gates were open to them to [enter] Islam. . . . Without blows or tortures [Christians] slipped towards apostasy in great precipitancy; they formed groups of ten or twenty or thirty or a hundred or two hundred or three hundred without any sort of compulsion . . . going down to Harran and becoming Muslims in the presence of [government] officials. A great crowd did so . . . from the districts of Edessa and of Harran and of Tella and of Reshʿayna.[92]

It is against this complex backdrop of the early ʿAbbasid period that we find, a generation after the death of John of Damascus, the beginnings of a Christian literature in Arabic. Already in the early eighth century there is evidence that Arabic was coming into use in a liturgical setting. There survives a bilingual fragment of Psalm 78 (LXX: 77) in Greek and Arabic written in Greek letters that was used in the Orthodox Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Damascus before its conversion into the Umayyad mosque. This seems to reflect a situation where a priest who did not know Arabic needed to minister to Arabic-speaking faithful who did not know Greek.[93] Such linguistic diversity had long been a feature of Orthodox worship in Syria—and even more so in the pilgrimage centers of Palestine where, prior to the Muslim conquest, interpreters would translate Biblical readings and sermons from Greek into the local Palestinian dialect.[94]

As the number of pilgrims declined and ties to Constantinople weakened over the course of the first century of ʿAbbasid rule, Greek gradually fell into disuse in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. This is demonstrated by the backgrounds of the monks populating the Palestinian monasteries. Whereas until the mid-eighth century many of the monks came from the major Greek-speaking cultural centers of Byzantium, by the ninth century the situation changes radically, and those monks whose identities are known to us from manuscript notes all have ties to Arabic- and/or Syriac-speaking regions of the caliphate.[95]

It is these Arabic-speaking Orthodox monks of Palestine who were the first to systematically adopt Arabic as a Christian literary language.[96] In the

second half of the eighth and over the course of the ninth century, they translated liturgical texts, much of the Bible, saints' lives, and various patristic works from Greek and Syriac into Arabic and composed the first original Arab Christian theological works. Some texts were translated practically simultaneously into several languages, as is the case with the works of Isaac the Syrian, translated at the monastery of Mar Saba in Palestine from the original Syriac, first into Greek (by the monks Abramius and Patricius, ca. 800) and subsequently into Arabic and Georgian.[97] The Arab Christian literature produced in this Orthodox Palestinian milieu addresses the immediate needs of Arab Orthodox Christians seeking to maintain their communal identity in an environment defined by an ever more assertive and sophisticated Islam.[98]

The earliest attempts at developing Orthodox Christian theological literature in Arabic are anonymous. This is the case with the **Apology for the Christian Faith** (chapter 1), which opens this anthology.* Written in Palestine in the second half of the eighth century, it demonstrates the challenge of articulating Christian beliefs in a language already permeated by Islamic theological vocabulary and the idiom of the Qurʾan. Strikingly, in its apologetic endeavor to demonstrate the truth of Christianity, the text seeks to turn this difficulty into an advantage and does not hesitate to cite passages from the Qurʾan itself as evidence for the Christian belief in a triune God.

Another anonymous text from the ninth century, *A Compilation of the Aspects of the Faith in the Triunity of God and the Incarnation of God the Word from the Pure Virgin Mary*, commonly referred to as the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*,[99] begins by explicitly decrying those Christians who shy away from proclaiming the distinctive dogmas of their faith in the face of Muslim criticism, accusing them of vacillation and hypocrisy. Indeed, in addition to its emphasis on the distinctiveness of such Christian beliefs as the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the power of the Cross, the text stresses the Christian believers' obligation to set themselves apart from their Islamic environment, listing beliefs that disqualify those holding them from being considered Christians as well as canons that discourage mixing with non-Christians. It is clear that the author of this treatise is concerned with the process of assimilation of Arabic-speaking Christians into the Islamic environment, which he sees as a dangerous development that can lead to apostasy. Yet even as he is concerned about assimilation, he consistently employs language resonant of the Qurʾan and Islamic theology and evinces familiarity with contemporary theological debates among Muslims.

* For texts translated in this anthology, the reader is directed to more detailed references provided in the "Suggested Reading" section of each chapter. A detailed guide to translations of Arab Orthodox literature into English and other languages is provided at the end of the volume.

The most significant figure of this early period is **Theodore Abu Qurra** (chapter 2), bishop of Harran in northern Syria (present-day southeast Turkey) in the early ninth century. Writing in Arabic, Greek, and possibly Syriac, Abu Qurra sought to articulate the teachings of the Orthodox Church within the context of the new interconfessional free-for-all that emerged under Islamic rule. Elaborating on the themes addressed earlier by John of Damascus and Anastasius of Sinai, Abu Qurra wrote polemical tracts against Jacobites, Nestorians, Jews, and Muslims as well as doctrinal treatises on the Orthodox faith, including a treatise in defense of icons.[100] Abu Qurra's criticism of those Christians who were abandoning the practice of prostration before icons, particularly before the miraculous image of Christ in Edessa (the *mandylion*), is strikingly similar to the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*'s rebuke for wavering Christians shying away from proclaiming Christian beliefs in the face of Muslim criticism.

Another important figure representing the early flowering of Arab Orthodox theology is Peter of Bayt Raʾs (Capitolias in Transjordan), the author of the long apologetic work *The Book of Proof*, formerly ascribed to Eutychius of Alexandria, which includes a fascinating account of the Christian holy places in Palestine, Transjordan, and Syria.[101]

As a result of the surge in conversions to Islam in the early ʿAbbasid period, religious polemic and interreligious debates became the call of the day. Christian-Muslim religious disputations often happened in special prearranged gatherings, called *majlis*, and were conducted before an audience, where a Muslim ruler would grant a Christian monk or theologian the permission to present his views and argue against a Muslim interlocutor or even against the ruler himself. Thus, accounts of such debates, both historical and fictional, developed into an extremely popular genre.[102] The present anthology includes an English translation of selections from one such debate, probably written in the ninth century: ***The Disputation of the Monk Abraham of Tiberias*** (chapter 3). In this disputation, set in Jerusalem around the year 820, the monk Abraham not only successfully debates three Muslim interlocutors in the presence of a Muslim emir but also, through the power of the Cross, passes three thaumaturgic tests—drinks poison with no harm, exorcises a demon, and does not get burned in fire—leading to the conversion to Christianity of several witnesses. In an environment where ordinary Christians would have needed to answer questions about their faith from Muslims, disputation texts such as this served as an accessible, entertaining form of popular catechism.[103]

The complex experience of living under Islamic rule also stimulated new developments in **Hagiography** (chapter 4). Apostasy from Islam was

punishable by death under Islamic law, and so we hear of a number of Orthodox Christians who converted to Islam, reverted to Christianity, and were martyred at the hands of the Muslim officials.[104] Such martyrdom stories—many of them originating from the Palestinian Orthodox milieu—served as a powerful tool in the hands of the Christian authorities to dissuade their flock from converting to Islam in the first place. The present anthology contains an integral translation of three such stories: the passion of Anthony Rawh, martyred in Raqqa (Syria) in 799; the passion of ʿAbd al-Masih al-Ghassani, martyred in the Palestinian city of Ramla in 857; and a miraculous story of a Muslim who converts to Christianity after seeing a Eucharistic miracle in the church of Saint George in Lydda and is then martyred for publicly proclaiming his conversion.

Arab Orthodox authors also dedicated themselves to writing histories. Though Qusta ibn Luqa, the famous translator mentioned above, reportedly wrote a world history, it is no longer extant, and the two earliest surviving examples of this genre are the history of the Patriarch of Alexandria, Eutychius (Saʿid ibn Batriq, d. 940), already mentioned above,[105] and the world history of **Agapius** (chapter 5), the tenth-century Orthodox bishop of Manbij (Mabbug or Hierapolis in northern Syria).[106] The present anthology includes an English translation of excerpts of Agapius's history, dealing mostly with the history of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint), Christian attitudes to Scripture, and the Christian claim that the Jews had deliberately tampered with the text of the Torah.

Another important Arab Orthodox historian is Yahya al-Antaki (early eleventh century), who composed an influential sequel to Eutychius's history, covering the period up to the year 1033–34.[107] Yahya's history is a crucial historical source for the persecution of Christians (and Jews) during the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim, on which more will be said shortly.

Arab Orthodox in Fatimid Palestine

In the late tenth and early eleventh centuries new political circumstances affected the development of Arab Christian literature. The ʿAbbasid caliphate based in Baghdad, which at its heyday in the eighth and ninth centuries had outshone any empire of its time in power and size, by the tenth century had largely disintegrated into a collection of small local dynasties governing its former territory nominally in the name of the ʿAbbasid caliph.

In 969 the North African Fatimid caliphate—a powerful rival to the ʿAbbasids, representing the Ismaʿili branch of Shiʿi Islam—conquered Palestine, devastating the monasteries and causing large numbers of monks to

flee to Constantinople. The cultural impact of these refugees, who naturally brought along important liturgical and ascetic manuscripts with them as they fled, should not be underestimated. This is likely the time, for instance, when the Greek translation of the works of Isaac the Syrian, produced at Mar Saba ca. 800, as mentioned above, was first introduced to Byzantium.

A generation later, the mentally unstable Fatimid caliph al-Hakim (r. 996–1021), scandalized by the miracle of the Holy Fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem,*[108] unleashed an unprecedented persecution of Christians (and Jews) in both Egypt and Palestine, destroying countless churches, including the Holy Sepulchre itself (which was subsequently rebuilt with Byzantine help).[109] It is the mass emigration of Christians during al-Hakim's persecution that seems to be primarily responsible for the decline of the Greek and Arab Orthodox Christian community in Egypt, leaving the Copts as the only significant Egyptian Christian group.[110]

Living under al-Hakim's persecution, the bishop **Sulayman al-Ghazzi** (chapter 6) composed a large body of devotional poetry as well as several dogmatic treatises. In Sulayman's poetry—presented in this anthology for the first time in a Western language—his joy in the mystery of the Incarnation and celebration of the Christian holy sites of Palestine (many of which were destroyed in his lifetime) contrasts with his highly personal lamentations over the loss of his son and grandson.

Another, virtually unknown, Arab Orthodox author from this period is the monk and priest Salih ibn Sa'id, whose monastic name is Christodoulos. He was born in Jerusalem ca. 980 and moved to Egypt at the age of nine when his father became a Fatimid civil servant. During al-Hakim's persecution, Salih fled Egypt and traveled to Edessa to venerate saints' relics and then journeyed all over Syria and Palestine, preaching and strengthening the Orthodox communities there. Subsequently, he returned to Jerusalem and served for five years as a priest in the newly rebuilt Church of the Resurrection (the Holy Sepulchre). He ended his life as a monk on Mount Sinai. Probably put in charge of the monastery's rich library, he would fill empty spaces in manuscripts with edifying notes and valuable recollections of his life and travels. His notes, many of which survive, are eloquent witnesses to interreligious tensions among Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the first half of the eleventh century and the challenges that Christian communities faced in the wake of al-Hakim's persecution.[111]

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* The Holy Fire is an annual celebration that takes place on Holy Saturday (the eve of Orthodox Easter), when fire believed to descend from heaven lights the candle of the Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem and is then distributed to the faithful. Modern videos of the Holy Fire celebration are easily available on the Internet.

The Byzantine Reconquest of Antioch

While bringing unprecedented hardship to the Christians of Egypt and Palestine, the disintegration of ʿAbbasid rule ushered in an age of cultural revival in northern Syria. One of the most detailed and fascinating accounts of Orthodox Christian life during this time is found in the story of the life and martyrdom of the patriarch of Antioch, Christopher (r. 960–67), written by the *protospatharios* (a Byzantine imperial title of honor) Ibrahim ibn Yuhanna (d. ca. 1025), who as a youth had been an eyewitness to the events he described.[112]

As recounted by Ibrahim ibn Yuhanna, Christopher, whose name in the world was ʿIsa, was originally a native of Baghdad. He traveled to Aleppo to serve as a secretary to one of the emirs under the local Hamdanid ruler, Sayf al-Dawla (r. 945–67). At some point during his service, Christopher went to Antioch with the intention of being consecrated Orthodox catholicos of Baghdad.*[113] This was during a time when the Orthodox communities of Baghdad and Romagyris (Shash, located near modern Tashkent) were disputing which city should have leadership over Orthodox populations in the eastern parts of the Islamic world.

Before the dispute could be resolved, the patriarch of Antioch, Agapius ibn al-Qaʿbarun (r. 953–59) died. With the support of Sayf al-Dawla, Christopher was elected patriarch. Immediately, he arranged to have two catholicoi consecrated: a native of Aleppo named Majid for Baghdad and a native of Antioch named Eutychius for Romagyris. Because of his close relationship with the Hamdanid court, Christopher was able to successfully negotiate tax concessions and other advantages for his flock.

In the 960s, Christopher's political connections with the Hamdanids came to cause him difficulties. As the Byzantine army was slowly advancing toward Antioch, a revolt against Hamdanid rule erupted in the city. In order not to be perceived as supporting the rebels, Christopher fled to the Monastery of Saint Simeon the Elder outside Aleppo and returned to Antioch only after the revolt had been quelled. Soon after this, on May 22, 967, Christopher was assassinated by political rivals of Sayf al-Dawla. He was quickly viewed as a saint and martyr, and his remains were interred at the monastery of Arshaya outside Antioch, then in the Cathedral of Antioch, and finally, during the reign of the patriarch Nicholas II (r. 1025–30), in the House of Saint Peter.

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* In regions that were large enough to support several metropolitans but were too far away from Antioch, a catholicos would be appointed to oversee local metropolitans, while himself representing them on the patriarchal synod. This arrangement is analogous to the modern concept of an autonomous church.

It is striking that Christopher was given this level of veneration while Antioch was under Byzantine rule, even though he was killed on account of his unwavering loyalty to his *Muslim* patron. One reason for this may be the number of his disciples who would continue to hold positions of importance in the Church of Antioch.

Two years after the patriarch Christopher's death, the armies of the Byzantine emperor Nikephoras Phokas (r. 963–69) entered Antioch and advanced through the coastal region of Syria as far south as Latakia.[114] During the century of Byzantine rule that followed, the region of Antioch did not lose its Arabic-speaking character. Rather than reverting to Greek as a literary language, Arab Orthodox theologians—writing for the first time under Christian rule—translated numerous Greek patristic texts into Arabic and composed original Christian works in that language.[115]

The first generation of Antiochene translators from Greek into Arabic includes Antonius, abbot of the famous Monastery of Saint Simeon the Wonderworker on the Black Mountain near Antioch,*[116] and Ibrahim ibn Yuhanna, the author of the life of the patriarch Christopher, mentioned above. Before becoming abbot of the Monastery of Saint Simeon, Antonius was a monk at Mar Saba. He was responsible for the Arabic translations of several treatises of John of Damascus (including his *Dialectica* and the *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*), as well as the *Spiritually Beneficial Tales* of Paul of Monembasia, a contemporary of Antonius, who occupied the bishopric of Monembasia in the Peloponnese in the year 955. A protégé of the patriarch Christopher, Ibrahim ibn Yuhanna was the author of several hagiographic works (of which the life of Christopher is the only extant example) and the translator of several *Orations* of Gregory of Nazianzus, a section of Dionysius the Areopagite's treatise *On Divine Names*, dealing with good and evil, and possibly some Greek sermons attributed to Ephrem the Syrian. Another disciple of Christopher, Chariton, abbot of the Monastery of Arshaya near Antioch, translated a selection of the works of Theodore the Studite (d. 826) into Arabic.

The most prolific translator of Greek texts into Arabic, however, was the eleventh-century Orthodox deacon ʿ**Abdallah ibn al-Fadl** (chapter 7). Benefitting from an excellent education in both Greek and Arabic, Ibn al-Fadl produced not only numerous translations of the Church Fathers (John Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus, Isaac of Nineveh, John of Damascus, and Andrew of Crete, among others) but also a translation of the Psalms

* According to the eleventh-century Christian physician and traveler Ibn Butlan, this monastery was half the size of the caliphal palace in Baghdad, and its wealth was estimated as 400,000 dinars per year.

that would continue to be copied and printed well into the nineteenth century.*[117] In his original theological works, most of which are still unpublished, as well as in marginal notes appended to his translations, Ibn al-Fadl displays a wide awareness not only of the patristic tradition but also of contemporary trends among the philosophers and theologians of Baghdad, both Christian and Muslim.[118] Ibn al-Fadl's works are emblematic of the cross-pollination between Byzantium and the Arab world that is so characteristic of Antioch under Byzantine rule in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

As a result of the endeavors of Ibn al-Fadl and other translators, as well as the work of earlier Palestinian translators, primarily at Mar Saba, a large corpus of patristic works came to be available in Arabic, including most of the works of John Chrysostom, the Cappadocian Fathers, Maximus the Confessor, and John of Damascus. This translation activity also spread beyond Byzantine territory into Muslim lands. Thus, the works ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite were translated into Arabic in 1009 in neighboring Damascus, then under Fatimid rule.[119] Nor was the translation activity in the region of Antioch limited to translations into Arabic. During that same period, translators such as Eprem Mtsire (Ephrem the Lesser; d. ca. 1101) translated many of these same patristic works from Greek into Georgian.[120]

The Antiochene translation movement also included such monastic works as the *Ascetical Homilies* of Isaac the Syrian and the *Book of the Ladder* of John Climacus, as well as the otherwise unknown treatise ***The Noetic Paradise*** (chapter 8). Originally written in Greek in Palestine, probably in the seventh or eighth century, *The Noetic Paradise* was most likely brought to Antioch by monks fleeing the Fatimid persecution of Christians in Palestine. This spiritual manual, a masterpiece of Greek patristic literature, no longer extant in Greek but available in Arabic, remains unpublished in any language and is presented to the English reader here for the first time.

Although Arabic seems to have been the primary language of culture in Byzantine Antioch, important Greek works were composed there as well. The most significant among these for Arab Christian literature are works of the eleventh-century author Nikon of the Black Mountain. Though he came from a noble family of Constantinople, Nikon did not receive an education fitting his station, a fact that he frequently laments. After a brief military career he became a monk at one of the monasteries of the Black Mountain near Antioch where the abbot was the former metropolitan of Anazarbus, Luke. Nikon apparently enjoyed Luke's favor, but when the latter died he was expelled from the monastery by fellow monks displeased by the strict

* Ibn al-Fadl's translation of select Psalms was even used for decoration of a seventeenth-century Christian house in Aleppo, now preserved in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin.

monastic discipline that he was trying to impose. Despite this, however, the patriarch Theodosius III (r. 1057–59) made Nikon the supervisor of the monasteries around Antioch. Nikon accepted this appointment but refused to accept the title of archimandrite. After a failed attempt to found his own monastery, Nikon resided at the Monastery of Saint Simeon the Wonderworker, and after the Seljuk seizure of Antioch (1084), he ultimately settled at the Monastery of the Mother of God of the Pomegranate (*tou Roidiou*).[121] As references to the "Franks" in his works suggest, Nikon was also a witness to the Crusader conquest of Antioch in 1098 and must have died around the first decade of the twelfth century. Nikon's two most significant literary works are the *Pandectes* and the *Taktikon*, which were both translated into Arabic during his lifetime or shortly thereafter. The latter work includes two different monastic *typika* and a record of Nikon's correspondence with the abbots of various monasteries around Antioch, an invaluable source for the history of monasticism during this turbulent time in the city's history.[122]

Gerasimus, abbot of the the monastery of Saint Simeon the Wonderworker near Antioch, is another prominent writer from this period. His only surviving work is an Arabic apology for Christianity in five parts entitled *An Exhaustive Compilation on the Doctrine that Brings Cure*, in which he cites "testimonies" for the Christian faith from the Old Testament, the works of pagan philosophers, and finally, from the Qurʾan.[123] Practically nothing is known about Gerasimus's life, except that he must have lived before the destruction of his monastery by the Mamluks (on which see below). Though it is conventional to place him in the thirteenth century, there is no compelling reason to assign him to this late period. For all we know, he might have been active much earlier and have been a contemporary of Nikon. In fact, one of the chapters of Nikon's *Taktikon* contains a letter to his "spiritual son" Gerasimus on the subject of the conversion of the Georgians to Christianity.[124] Though it cannot be proven without further evidence, it is at least possible that this Gerasimus is the Arabic-speaking author of the Apology.

Finally, mention should be made of the Arab Orthodox bishop of Homs, **Agathon** (chapter 9), introduced for the first time in English in this anthology. Also an Antiochene, he was approached by a delegation of the dignitaries of Homs (Emesa) in Syria asking him to become bishop of their city. He accepted the post with much trepidation, considering himself to be unworthy of the task. Yet several years later he resigned his post in the wake of canonical irregularities and certain unspecified "blasphemies" among the high clergy. In order to justify his decision, he wrote an extensive apology, which contains a lengthy disquisition on the nature of priesthood—perhaps the most elaborate discussion of the subject in all of Arab Christian literature.

Although there is little direct mention of Latin Christianity in Arab Orthodox literature prior to the sixteenth century,[125] the patriarch of Antioch, Peter III (d. 1056) was an active participant in the dispute between Rome and Constantinople that led to the Great Schism. A native of Antioch, and thus likely an Arabic or Syriac speaker who was educated in Constantinople, Peter corresponded with both Dominicus, the archbishop of Grado, and Michael Cerularius, the patriarch of Constantinople (r. 1043–59), arguing that, while Latin liturgical practice—especially the use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist—was incorrect, this should not lead to schism. Despite his efforts, in the schism of 1054, Antioch ultimately sided with Constantinople.[126]

Arab Orthodox under the Crusaders, Mongols, and Mamluks

With the arrival of the Crusaders in the Levant and the conquest of Antioch (1098) and Jerusalem (1099), Orthodox Christians in the Crusader principalities found themselves in the new situation of living under foreign Christian rule.[127] While the Crusaders had relatively friendly and cooperative relations with some indigenous Christian communities (notably the Maronites, who entered into union with the Roman Church in the twelfth century, and the Armenians), Orthodox Christians, called *Graeci et Suriani* by the Crusaders,[128] were treated with distrust on account of their ties to Byzantium, the very recent schism between Rome and the Eastern patriarchates, and (in the case of the Arab Orthodox) their "Saracen" language and culture that they shared with Muslims.[129]

The mostly Greek-speaking Orthodox hierarchy of the patriarchate of Jerusalem, which had already been in disarray by the time of the First Crusade, was quickly replaced by Latin bishops. In the patriarchate of Antioch, a similar situation emerged after the Orthodox patriarch of Antioch, John the Oxite, initially reinstalled by the Crusaders, fled to Constantinople. The Crusaders then elected their own Latin patriarch of Antioch, Bernard of Valence, and for the next century there would be parallel patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem, one Latin and the other in exile in Constantinople. Though this state of affairs, which continued until the Crusader conquest of Constantinople in 1204, sometimes caused resentment on the part of the local Christians, in many places there is also evidence of ecclesiastical symbiosis and liturgical communion between the Latin and the Greek and Arab Orthodox clergy.[130]

The challenging circumstances of the Crusades did not end Arab Orthodox literary activity in the Levant. An important author from this period who displays a close engagement with Islamic theology is **Paul of Antioch** (chapter

10), a late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century bishop of Sidon. In his *Letter to a Muslim Friend*, presented here for the first time in English, Paul of Antioch attempted to reinterpret the career of Muhammad within a Christian framework and to prove the veracity of Christianity on the basis of passages from the Qurʾan. In his outwardly courteous and polite but in fact highly provocative and subversive letter, Paul boldly argued that the Qurʾanic message was meant only for pagan Arabs and did not apply to Christians at all and that, moreover, the Qurʾan itself urged Christians to remain loyal to Christianity and resist conversion to Islam. Paul of Antioch's *Letter*, as well as its subsequent adaptation by an anonymous Christian from Cyprus (prepared in the early fourteenth century), stirred sharp reactions from Muslim scholars who continued writing refutations of it for the following century and a half.[131]

Another important author of the period is Patriarch Athanasius II of Jerusalem (ca. 1231–44), the author of a collection of homilies for the Sundays of the year and major feasts. It is possible that these homilies were originally written in Greek, but they were soon translated into Arabic for the benefit of the Arabic-speaking faithful of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. To judge from the large number of manuscripts of these homilies, they enjoyed considerable popularity.[132]

The arrival of the Mongols—who were initially favorably disposed toward the Christians and, under the influence of their (Nestorian) Christian wives, were themselves considering conversion to Christianity—briefly raised the hopes of the Christians of Damascus for a restoration of Christian rule.*[133] After the Mongol conquest of Damascus in March 1260, the Christian communities secured a protected status from the Mongol rulers and launched a triumphant procession with crosses through the streets of the city. Muslim chroniclers report with indignation that the jubilant Christians went as far as pouring wine on Muslim bystanders and on the walls of the mosques. After the Mongol defeat at the hands of the Egyptian Mamluks at ʿAyn Jalut (Palestine) in September of the same year, the Christians of Damascus faced a bloody reprisal, with the Orthodox cathedral of the Mother of God (the "Maryamiyya") burned to the ground.†[134]

The ensuing conquest of Syria by the Mamluks ushered in a long dark period in the history of Middle Eastern Christianity from which we have few

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* A Syriac manuscript illustration from that time period even depicts the Mongol Khan Hülegü and his Christian wife Doguz Khatun as the new Constantine and Helen.

† This was not the first time the Maryamiyya was destroyed: it had been destroyed in 924 (as reported by Saʿid ibn Batriq), then again in 950 (as reported by the Muslim historian Ibn ʿAsakir), and then in 1009, on the orders of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim. Later on it suffered in the earthquake of 1759 and was destroyed again in the anti-Christian riots of 1860.

literary remains. When the Sultan Baybars (d. 1277) sacked Antioch in 1268, he massacred the city's Christian population and destroyed the monasteries in its vicinity, including the famous monastery of Saint Simeon the Wonderworker. Antioch would never recover from this blow. It was under these circumstances that the patriarchal see of Antioch was removed from the city and was eventually transferred to Damascus, where it remains until the present day.[135]

The same disastrous fate awaited the Christian inhabitants of Tripoli in Lebanon upon the Mamluk conquest of the city from the Franks in 1287. The little-known Arab Orthodox poet Sulayman al-Ashluhi, an eyewitness to the events, described the events of the fall of Tripoli in the following way:

> People asked me, "You wretched one, why are you crying?"
> I responded, "My brothers, my heart is distressed.
> I cry over the Christians, I lament what befell them
> That Tuesday which became the day of disaster.
> The Turks entered the streets, attacking the city,
> Encircling it from land and sea, with all its inhabitants. [. . .]
> How many youths they slaughtered in front of their mothers' eyes,
> Youths crying, 'Mother, from where did this day come to me!' [. . .]
> The Orthodox church further added to my grief,
> On account of it I became drunk with sorrow.
> I remember it jostling with people on festivals,
> When the candles were lit, and the priest was jubilant. [. . .]
> How many voluptuous girls would walk by its side,
> Their stature is like branches of the ben tree. [. . .]
> It is now in ruins and desolation, with no worshippers;
> Thank God, at least the owls took it as their residence."[136]

With the other changes that swept through the Middle East in the fourteenth century—the Islamization of the Mongols, the Black Death of the 1340s, and the devastating military campaigns of Tamerlane—the Christian population of the Middle East entered a period of steep decline, and there remain very few examples of literary works written by Arab Orthodox Christians in this period.

Arab Orthodox under the Ottomans

The incorporation of Syria and Palestine, as well as Egypt, into the Ottoman Empire in the early sixteenth century reversed the tide and was benefi-

cial to Orthodox Christians in the Middle East.[137] Ironically, this was due to the fact that by this time the Ottoman Empire also controlled Constantinople (conquered in 1453) and the Balkans. This meant that, for the first time since the early seventh century, Arab Orthodox Christians of the Middle East were reunited within a single polity with the Orthodox Christians of those regions. This greatly facilitated travel and communications between the patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem among the linguistically diverse Orthodox communities of the empire. On the other hand, extremely harsh taxes imposed on Christian populations by the Ottomans, as well as the Ottoman practice of demanding exorbitant bribes in exchange for approval of new patriarchs and bishops, resulted in a constant state of financial ruin for the Christian communities, particularly in the Patriarchate of Antioch. The need for outside funding as well as assistance in raising the level of education among the clergy and the laity would become a major impetus for the patriarchs of Antioch to travel abroad and maintain correspondence with foreign Christians, both Orthodox and Roman Catholic.

This expansion of the horizons of the Arab Orthodox coincided with a tremendous increase in western Europe's interest in the eastern Mediterranean. At first, this interest was chiefly commercial. In 1535, eager to make the Ottoman Empire more competitive with the Italian merchant states, particularly Venice, the sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520–66) granted a lower rate of tariff to French merchants, the first of the so-called "capitulations." Soon afterward similar agreements were made with the other major European trading powers. This led to the first significant, more or less permanent, European presence in the Levant since the Crusades.

This European, and especially French, involvement with the Middle East created new opportunities for Roman Catholic missionary activity in Ottoman territory. While in the wake of the Crusades Rome had maintained sporadic contact with the churches of the Middle East, particularly the Maronites, and there had long been a Franciscan presence in the Holy Land, it was only in the sixteenth century that the Catholic Church made concerted efforts to missionize Middle Eastern Christians with the aim of uniting them to Rome. In 1552 elements of the Church of the East in northern Mesopotamia, motivated by internal quarrels, entered into communion with Rome and formed the Chaldean Catholic Church. In the 1580s the Jesuit mission to Syria, headed by Leonardo Abel, sought to exploit the schism between two rival Orthodox patriarchs of Antioch, Michael al-Hamawi and Yuwakim Daw', in order to draw each of the contenders into union with Rome. Michael al-Hamawi submitted a written confession of the Catholic faith to the pope, but since he had already lost the battle over the see of Antioch to

Yuwakim Daw' and had no real power, the Catholic Church soon lost interest in him. Yuwakim Daw', on the other hand, rejected the pope's offer of union. The Orthodox metropolitan of Tripoli, Anastasius ibn Mujalla—one of the most talented Arab Orthodox theologians of the sixteenth century—wrote a (still unpublished) anti-Latin theological treatise in response to the Catholic missionaries. Interestingly, in addition to traditional arguments against the Latins, Anastasius also polemicizes against the Gregorian calendar, introduced by the Catholic Church in 1582.[138]

In 1588 the Maronite College was founded in Rome to educate Maronite clergy and spread Counter-Reformation ideals in Lebanon. In 1622 the Congregation de Propaganda Fide was established to coordinate Rome's missionary endeavors and was charged with the task of conducting all correspondence with the churches of the Middle East. Such missionary activities were greatly facilitated by the presence of European merchants, and the French government in particular saw the promotion of Catholicism in the Ottoman Empire as a foreign policy priority. Under the terms of the capitulations (especially those of 1673, which granted French priests diplomatic status), missionaries were able to use their ministry among European Catholic merchants and diplomats in the Levant as cover for clandestine missionary activities among Middle Eastern Christians.

Aleppo and the port cities of Tyre and Sidon became the chief centers of Roman Catholic activity in the Levant. The missionaries' strategy was not to seek out individual converts because doing so would run the risk of creating conflicts with both the Orthodox leadership and the Ottoman authorities. Instead, they attempted to win over Orthodox elites, both among the clergy and among the Orthodox merchant class that was rapidly developing as a consequence of the expansion of trade with Europe. This goal was achieved through education—teaching, preaching, and hearing confessions—and the cultivation of personal relationships. For this reason much of the Roman Catholic missionary activity at the time took place in the private chapels of wealthy Orthodox families. These efforts were largely successful, in that these activities were often welcomed by Orthodox bishops who were all too aware of their own clergy's educational deficiencies. Thus, the wealthy Orthodox merchant class came to be attracted to the religious and spiritual expressions of Christianity favored by their European counterparts.[139]

As a result of relative political stability and of the new cultural factors surveyed above, the early Ottoman period witnessed a powerful cultural revival among the Arab Orthodox in Syria. Perhaps the most momentous transformation of Arab Orthodox cultural life during this period was brought about by the gradual introduction of printing. Printing was slow to

arrive in the Arab world, despite the fact that the earliest Arabic printing press was established in Venice as early as the end of the fifteenth century. Among some Arab Christians and even more so among Muslims, there was considerable resistance to this new technology.[140] This meant that Arabic-speaking Christians who desired printed books were dependent on Italian printing presses and, more often than not, on material support from Rome for funding, preparing, and distributing printed Arabic texts. The first Arabic-language printing press in Orthodox hands was founded at the beginning of the eighteenth century in the principality of Wallachia, then nominally under Ottoman suzerainty, and was imported to Aleppo in 1706. In 1720 it was moved to Lebanon on account of opposition to its use among conservative Orthodox Christians.

Despite its high costs and slow adoption, printing technology came to have a profound impact on Arab Orthodox religious life. One main reason for this is the nature of the books printed. They were not the literary, theological, and philosophical works of the sort collected in this anthology; rather, printing focused primarily on psalters and liturgical books. In addition, Roman presses also produced Arabic translations of Counter-Reformation spiritual and theological manuals for use and distribution by Catholic missionaries in the Levant.

Another aspect of the cultural and spiritual impact of printing is illustrated by the career of Meletius Karma.[141] Born in Hama (Syria) in 1572 to the family of a priest who died when he was still a child, Meletius, whose given name was ʿAbd al-Karim, went as a youth to the Monastery of Mar Saba in Palestine. After spending two years there and mastering Greek, he was called back to Syria where he served as a deacon and then as a priest. After being consecrated as metropolitan of Aleppo in 1612, he oversaw the revision of nearly all the major liturgical texts as well as the Bible. This was done on the basis of printed Greek liturgical texts that he generally followed slavishly, despite the assurances in many of his writings that he also consulted a variety of Arabic and Syriac liturgical manuscripts.[142] Subsequent patriarchs of Antioch would favor Meletius's liturgical texts. Thus, in the case of Arab Orthodox as in the case of other Orthodox churches, the ready availability of printed Greek liturgical texts led to the elimination of local liturgical particularities in favor of standardization. Meletius's revision of the *Synaxarion* was an especially stark break with the Arab Orthodox tradition, as it effectively suppressed the unique character of Antioch's church calendar, replacing it with that of Constantinople.[143]

Meletius's time as metropolitan of Aleppo was marked by the instability and infighting that was all too frequent in the Patriarchate of Antioch in the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; in such circumstances it is remarkable that Meletius was able to undertake his labors at all. In 1615, only three years after his consecration as metropolitan, Meletius was forced to travel to Constantinople to defend himself against accusations leveled against him by the patriarch of Antioch, Athanasius II Dabbas (r. 1611–19), the same patriarch who had consecrated him as metropolitan of Aleppo. Following the death of Athanasius II in 1619, the Patriarchate of Antioch was torn by a schism between supporters of the metropolitan of Sidon, Ignatius Atiya, and those of the metropolitan of Bosra and the brother of the late patriarch Athanasius, Cyril Dabbas. Meletius strongly supported Ignatius and, as a result, was constantly attacked by the followers of Cyril, who even arranged that the Ottoman authorities would throw him in prison in 1625 on the grounds that he owed back taxes. It was only under pressure from Ignatius's political protector the Druze emir of Lebanon, Fakhr al-Din ibn Maʿn (d. 1635), that a council was convened at Raʾs Baalbek to resolve the conflict. Cyril apparently knew that his cause was lost and so did not attend the council, and Ignatius was recognized as the legitimate patriarch. Following Ignatius's death in 1634, Meletius was elected patriarch and took the name Euthymius II at his consecration in May of that year.

His patriarchal reign would last only seven months. Incapacitated by illness, he resigned his patriarchate in December 1634 in favor of Meletius of Chios (r. 1634–37) and died on January 1, 1635. After his death a number of Jesuit missionaries resident in Syria at the time claimed that Karma had been poisoned on account of his close cooperation with Latin missionaries (as metropolitan of Aleppo, he had encouraged the Jesuits to found a school there and as patriarch of Antioch he did the same in Damascus) and on account of his secret desire for union with Rome. As shown by later events, such a pro-Roman attitude was threatening not only to traditionalists within the patriarchate but also to the Ottoman authorities, who were concerned that their Christian subjects would start looking to the authority of a European power.

All the major trends among Arab Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman period join together in the career of **Macarius Ibn al-Zaʿim** (chapter 11), the patriarch of Antioch in 1647–72 and a central figure in the Arab Orthodox revival of the Ottoman period. A protégé of Meletius Karma, who like Karma also became patriarch after having been metropolitan of Aleppo, Macarius authored a largely unpublished notebook that reveals a vast knowledge of the history and traditions of the Church of Antioch. As patriarch, Macarius traveled twice overland to Russia via Constantinople, Wallachia, Moldavia, and Ukraine in order to solicit funds from the Orthodox rulers of these lands. While in Russia he played an important role in advising the

patriarch of Moscow, Nikon (r. 1652–58), during the latter's liturgical reforms, which, like those of Meletius Karma, were stimulated by the ready availability of printed Greek liturgical texts. On his second visit to Russia in 1666, Macarius participated in the trial against Patriarch Nikon. The extensive diary kept during these travels by Patriarch Macarius's son and secretary, Archdeacon **Paul of Aleppo** (chapter 12), provides invaluable information on the history of the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire, southeastern Europe, Russia, and Georgia,[144] as well as on the relationship between the different Orthodox communities at the time.

In contrast to the modernizing efforts of his teacher Meletius, Macarius was keenly interested in restoring and preserving the medieval heritage of his church. This was achieved largely through the copying and distribution of manuscripts of old works, many of which, without the efforts of Macarius, would likely have been lost to history. In addition, in his *Book of the Bee* (*Kitab al-Nahla*) and in the *Synaxarion*, he celebrates the lives of many of the writers mentioned in this anthology, honoring many of them, including ʿAbdallah ibn al-Fadl, Nikon of the Black Mountain, Gerasimus, and Paul of Antioch, as saints.[145]

In addition to his close ties with the Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe, Macarius also maintained correspondence both with the Congregation de Propaganda Fide and with King Louis XIV of France (r. 1643–1715), seeking financial aid and donations of printed books. He also continued his predecessors' support of Latin missionaries, allowing them to preach and hear confessions of the Orthodox faithful. This policy would have serious consequences in the following generations.

When Macarius died in June 1672, his grandson Constantine was elected patriarch and consecrated with the name Cyril V.[146] During this time rivalry between the two cities of Aleppo and Damascus would cause a schism with deeper repercussions than the one that had happened earlier in the century. Although Cyril had the support of the people of Aleppo, he was held in suspicion by the inhabitants of Damascus, who were concerned about the increasing Latin influence in the church. The Damascenes suspected Cyril was too young to combat this Latin influence effectively—it was even rumored that he was too young to be canonically elected as patriarch. Appeals were made to Constantinople to block Cyril's consecration. These appeals were successful, and Neophytos of Chios, a nephew of Macarius's predecessor, Euthymius III of Chios (r. 1635–47), was appointed by Constantinople to be patriarch of Antioch. This was the first direct intervention by the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the election of a patriarch of Antioch since the Crusader period. Although the Orthodox churches of the Ottoman Empire were notionally organized according to the so-called "*millet* system," in which the Ottoman

sultan recognized the patriarch of Constantinople as the head of all the Orthodox Christians in the empire, until that time for all practical purposes the Patriarchate of Antioch had managed to maintain its independence.

Aleppo's merchants, arguably the single most influential bloc among the Arab Orthodox laity, were unwilling to accept Constantinople's interference in the affairs of their church. They used their considerable connections and financial resources to bolster Cyril's position in both Constantinople and Damascus. Unable to compete, Neophytos resigned from the patriarchate in 1682 in favor of Cyril. This, however, would not mean the end of Cyril's troubles, as it had become clear that in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities the see of Antioch was permanently up for sale. In 1685 the French were able to buy the sultan's recognition of the strongly pro-Catholic Athanasius III Dabbas as patriarch. A year later Athanasius made a secret profession of faith to the pope of Rome, but in 1687 Cyril's supporters were able to win back the sultan's recognition for Cyril. The patriarchal see continued to be disputed between the two men until a compromise was reached in 1694 whereby Cyril would remain patriarch while Athanasius would be made metropolitan of Aleppo and would have the right of succession to Cyril after the latter's death. Rome, however, continued to recognize Athanasius as the rightful patriarch of Antioch, setting the stage for schism. As metropolitan of Aleppo, Athanasius became an energetic supporter of union with Rome.

In Cyril V's later years he came to favor union as well and signed a Catholic profession of faith in 1716. When Cyril died in 1720, Athanasius III Dabbas was chosen as patriarch, with the condition that he travel to Constantinople to meet with the Ecumenical Patriarch. Surprisingly, after this meeting, during the four brief years of his patriarchate, he would prove to be as strong an opponent of union with Rome as he had been a supporter of it during his time as metropolitan of Aleppo. Upon Athanasius's death in 1724, the people of Damascus elected the pro-Rome Cyril VI Tannas as patriarch, while both the people of Aleppo and the patriarch of Constantinople opposed his election and instead consecrated Sylvester, a monk from Cyprus, as patriarch. Cyril Tannas fled to Lebanon and received Rome's recognition as rightful patriarch. From this point on, there would be two parallel hierarchies in the Patriarchate of Antioch, one in communion with Rome and the other maintaining its historical communion with the other Orthodox churches.

The schism of 1724, occurring during a time of rapid social change in the Middle East, marked a significant break with the past for both Catholic and Orthodox communities. Under Roman tutelage the Arab Catholic ("Melkite") community in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came under strong Latin theological and liturgical influence—a process that only

began to be reversed in the late nineteenth century with Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Orientalium Dignitas* of 1894. Similarly, the Arab Orthodox of the Patriarchate of Antioch would remain under a series of ethnically Greek patriarchs until 1899.*[147] These patriarchs would continue the work of Meletius Karma in bringing the Arab Orthodox liturgy and *synaxarion* into close conformity with the practice of Constantinople—a process that resulted in a sort of "cultural amnesia" of the Arab Orthodox past. Though over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries both Arab Catholics and Arab Orthodox continued to read, copy, and study manuscripts of texts from the earlier Arab Christian tradition, many of these texts eventually became forgotten. Even today, sadly, they remain unknown to the majority of Arab Orthodox and Catholic faithful themselves. It was only in the first decade of the twentieth century that the Jesuit Louis Cheikho and the Melkite Catholic priest Constantine Basha prepared the first printed editions of medieval Arab Orthodox texts, thus making them available to a wider audience. Translations of these texts into European languages—French, German, English, and Russian—also began to appear. Their efforts were continued by Georg Graf, Ignace Dick, Samir Khalil Samir, Joseph Nasrallah, Sidney Griffith, and many others.

The present anthology hopes to continue this promising trend by introducing to the English reader some of these unduly forgotten texts. It is the editors' hope that it will help stimulate further interest in Arab Christianity, a fascinating and culturally important but long-neglected chapter in the history of the Orthodox Church. As the texts assembled in this anthology show, the unique witness of the Orthodox Church in the Arab lands holds important lessons for us today. These texts, representing the major genres of Orthodox literature in Arabic—theology, hagiography, church history, religious polemic, devotional poetry, and ascetical literature—enrich our understanding of Orthodox Christianity. They also provide a more balanced understanding of the multicultural and multireligious society of the Arab Middle East, of which Orthodox Christianity has always been and—we pray—will always remain an integral part.

* In 1899 Meletius II Doumani—the first Arab patriarch since 1724—was appointed to the see of Antioch, with intense diplomatic support from the Russian Empire.

CHAPTER 1

An Apology for the Christian Faith

رسالة دفاعية في العقائد المسيحية

Mark N. Swanson

The library of the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai preserves, as Sinai ar. 154, a parchment codex usually dated to around the year 800—making it the oldest (reasonably well preserved) Arabic-language Christian book known to us today. The larger part of the codex is occupied with an Arabic translation of parts of the New Testament (Acts and the Catholic Epistles), but at the end of the manuscript we find an extraordinary work of Christian apologetic theology. This treatise, for which no witnesses besides the Mount Sinai codex are known, is an important starting point for the study of Chalcedonian Orthodox theology in the Arabic language and, indeed, for the study of Arabic Christian literature in general.

This Arabic apologetic treatise is by no means a new discovery. Margaret Dunlop Gibson photographed the apology during a visit to the Monastery of Saint Catherine in 1897, and she published a transcription of the manuscript along with an English translation of the apology in 1899.[1] A review by J. Rendel Harris in 1901 attempted to bring the work to the attention of the scholarly world.[2] However, interest in the apology remained mostly dormant until 1988, when Samir Khalil Samir called the attention of the Third International Congress of Christian Arabic Studies to the significance of the work.[3] Samir has prepared a new edition of the work, which will be published along with the present writer's full English translation, God willing.[4]

Unfortunately, we know neither the name of the apology's author nor its title. The author was probably a monk of one of the monasteries of Palestine or Sinai, someone with extensive knowledge of the Bible *and* of the Qurʾan—and there's little more that can be said. A working title for the work has to be supplied by its readers. Mrs. Gibson called it *Fi tathlith Allah al-wahid* or "On the Triune Nature of God," but this title, while

common in present scholarship, fails to describe a wide-ranging apologetic text in which the chapter on the Trinity occupies just four leaves out of forty-one. In his review of Gibson's book, Rendel Harris suggested the title *Contra Muhammedanos* ("Against the Muslims"),[5] but this too is inadequate since the treatise, although at many points addressed to Muslims, is remarkably free of polemic: it is not really "against" anybody. I prefer to call the work *An Apology for the Christian Faith*—or simply the *Apology* for short.

We are fortunate in having a date—of sorts—for the *Apology*. In a passage translated below, the author gives the very precise figure of 746 years as the time passed since God "established" the Christian religion. I have argued that this means 746 years after the *death* of Christ as calculated in the Alexandrian world era, yielding the date of 788 CE;[6] calculating from the *birth* of Christ it results in the date of 755 CE.[7] In any event, our *Apology* is manifestly a product of the eighth Christian century.

The contents of the work are as follows.

Invocation and Opening Prayer (fol. 99r)—translated below in full
I. On the Trinity and the Incarnation (fol. 99r–111v)
- A. The Trinity: God and His Word and His Spirit (fol. 99r–102v)—translated below in full
- B. Christ (fol. 102v–111v)
  1. Why the Incarnation? (The story of redemption, from Adam to Christ) (fol. 102v–108r)—translated below in full
  2. Christ's Divinity (fol. 108r–111v)—one excerpt translated below

II. Testimonies[8] (fol. 111v–139v)
- A. On the Life of Christ (23 Old Testament witnesses) (fol. 111v–128v)—four excerpts translated below
- B. On Baptism (8 Old Testament witnesses) (fol. 128v–137r)—one excerpt translated below
- C. On the Cross (3 Old Testament witnesses) (fol. 137r–139v)—two excerpts translated below

The *Apology* is a fascinating and significant work for a variety of reasons. Many readers are struck by the way that its Christian author can use the Qurʾan, sometimes quoting entire verses but more frequently weaving short phrases or even single highly resonant words into his discourse. For example, in explaining humanity's need for redemption, the author makes use of both Biblical and Qurʾanic material as he presents the stories of Adam

and Eve, Noah, Abraham and Lot, Moses, and finally Mary and Jesus.[9] The chapter on the Trinity sets the stage for later Arabic-language apologetics by adducing arguments both from scripture (*al-naql* or "that which is transmitted," to use the later vocabulary) and from reason (*al-ʿaql*). The short passage on the True Religion likewise stands at the beginning of a major apologetic *topos* in Christian Arabic texts.* And in the section devoted to *testimonia*, that is, Old Testament passages understood to be prophecies or foreshadowings of Christ and the Church, the author adopts an ancient genre of Christian literature and deploys it, perhaps for the first time in the Arabic language, for conversation with Muslims.[10]

Or so it seems; indeed, the *Apology* at several junctures explicitly addresses Muslim readers. But is it likely that many Muslims read it? We do not know. In fact, the rather complex exegesis of some of the Old Testament *testimonia* suggests an audience that had considerable familiarity with "in-house" Christian traditions of interpretation but who needed to be reminded of the beauty of the Biblical worldview, so elegantly unified by arcs of prophecy and fulfillment.[11] But even if the work is not really an eighth-century example of "Christian-Muslim dialogue," it is a remarkable early attempt to forge a Christian discourse that might be accessible to Qurʾanically trained readers and to explain core Christian doctrines in a way that takes Islamic challenges seriously into account.[12]

Translation

Invocation and Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one god.[13]

O God, by Your mercy grant us success in attaining what is true and right!

Praise be to God,†[14] before whom was nothing, for He was before all things; after whom is nothing, for He is the Heir of all things, and to Him is the destiny of all things; who has preserved in His knowledge the knowledge of all things (for nothing has capacity for that save His knowledge); in whose knowledge all things come to their end, for He has numbered all things in His knowledge.

We ask You, O God, by Your mercy and Your power, to make us among those who know Your truth, follow Your good pleasure, avoid Your wrath, extol

* See chapter 2 below for an integral translation of Theodore Abu Qurra's treatise on discerning the True Religion.

† From this opening "Praise be to God" (*al-ḥamdu li-llāh*; cf. Qurʾan 1:2) to the end of the prayer, the Christian author uses Qurʾanic expressions and vocabulary in an allusive and unforced way.

Your most beautiful names,[15] and speak using Your most sublime similitudes.[16]

You are the Merciful-in-Deed, the All-Merciful, the Merciful-in-Self.* You sat upon the Throne,[17] were exalted above the creatures, and filled all things. You choose, but are not subject to anyone's choosing; You determine, but are not subject to anyone's determining; You are independent of us, but we are in need of You. [You are] near to the one who draws near to You, and responsive to the one who calls upon You and beseeches You to hear. For You, O God, are Lord of all things, god of all things, and Creator of all things.

Open our mouths, loosen our tongues, soften our hearts, and lay open our breasts for the praise of Your glorious[18] name—which is exalted and great, blessed and holy. For there is no god before You, and no god after You.[19] To You is the destiny [of all things],[20] and over all things You are Almighty.[21]

I. On the Trinity and the Incarnation

I.A. The Trinity: God and His Word and His Spirit

To You be praise, O God, Creator of the heavens and the earth and what is in them—by Your Word and Your Spirit. To You be praise, O God, Dweller in the light, Creator of the angels and the spirit,[22] that they might extol Your name (Your *holy* name), the mission[23] of Your name, and the authority of Your power. They do not grow weary of proclaiming Your greatness and holiness, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, the mighty Lord, with whose glory the heavens and the earth are filled."[24] They extol [God] three times and conclude with one "Lord," that people might know[25] that the angels extol God and His Word and His Spirit, one god and one Lord.

You we worship,[26] our Lord and our God, with Your Word and Your Spirit. For You, O God, created the heavens and the earth and what is in them by Your Word, and gave life to the hosts of angels by the Holy Spirit. And so we praise You, O God, and extol You and glorify You, with Your creating Word and Your life-giving Holy Spirit: one god, one Lord, one Creator. We do not separate God from His Word and His Spirit; we do not worship (with God and His Word and His Spirit) any other god.

God has made His reality known with clarity and light in the Torah, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the Gospel:[27] that God and His Word and His Spirit are one god and one Lord. We shall make this clear in [passages from] these revealed[28] scriptures, if God wills, for the benefit of the one who desires knowledge, who looks deeply into matters, who recognizes the truth, and who lays

* The author takes the well-known Qurʾanic pair of names of God, *al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*, and prefaces them with the related participial form *al-rāḥim* in order to form a triad, perhaps in anticipation of his later Trinitarian discourse.

open one's breast[29] to believe in God and His scriptures. As Christ said in the Gospel: "You search the scriptures, for in them you shall find everlasting life."[30] He also said: "To the one who asks shall be given; the one who seeks shall find; to the one who asks [for the door] to be opened shall it be opened."[31]

Likewise, it is written at the beginning of the Torah (which God revealed to His prophet Moses on Mount Sinai): "In the beginning, *God* created heaven and the earth."[32] Then He said: "*The Spirit* of God was upon the waters."[33] And then He said by *His Word*: "'Let there be light,' and there was light."[34] Then He said: "'Let there be a firmament,' and there was a firmament"[35]—which is the lower heaven. Then He said: "'Let the earth give growth to herbage and greenery and fruit-bearing trees,' etc., and 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures-with-breath: wild animals and cattle, beasts of prey and beasts of burden,' and it was so."[36] Then He said: "'Let the waters bring forth of every sort possessing breath, and every bird flying in heaven, according to their kinds and genera,' and it was so."[37] And then He said: "Let Us create the human according to Our likeness and pattern."[38] Thus God announced clearly at the beginning of a scripture that He revealed to His prophet Moses that God and His Word and His Spirit are one god, and that God (may He be blessed and exalted!) created all things and gave life to all things by His Word and His Spirit.

We do not say "three gods"—God forbid! Rather, we say: "God and His Word and His Spirit are one god, one Creator."* That is like the disc of the sun (which is in heaven), and the rays that come forth from the sun, and the heat that is from the sun: one from another. We do not say that they are three suns but, rather, one sun in which there are three names, which are not separated one from another.

Or like the eye, the pupil of the eye, and the light that is in the eye.† We do not say that they are three eyes but, rather, one eye in which there are three names.

Or like the soul, body, and spirit: we do not separate one from another. We do not say "three humans" but, rather, "one human," three names in a single identity.

Or like the trunk of a tree, the branch of a tree, and the fruit of a tree. We do not say that they are three trees but, rather, one tree, one part from another. Even if [the fruit] is made manifest and appears to people in its own time, we

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* This sentence appears to be a response to Qurʾan 4:171 and its exhortation to Christians, "Do not say 'Three'!" The same verse speaks of the Messiah, son of Mary, as "[God's] word . . . and a spirit from Him."

† The analogy depends on ancient physiology, according to which sight is the result of light resident in the eye going forth and then returning.

know that it is all from the *tree*—both when it appears and before it appears.

Or like a spring of water: [the water] wells up from the spring, then flows away from it as a river, and then the river water gathers and becomes a lake. We are not able to separate one from another! But even if their names are different, we do not say that they are "three waters" but, rather, "one water": in the spring, the river, and the lake; when it gathers and when it separates.

Or like the spirit of a human being, one's intellect, and the word that is begotten of one's intellect—one from another, for the spirit is in the intellect and the word is from the intellect, one from another. We do not separate them, for each one becomes manifest and is known from the other.

Or like the mouth, the tongue that is in the mouth, and the word that comes forth from the tongue. Such is our statement about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, about whom the prophets prophesied and said: "The mouth of the Lord has spoken."[39]

All this is the exposition of our faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one Lord. We know God with His Word and His Spirit, and the Word of God and His Spirit are in Him. We extol Him and praise Him. It is appropriate that human beings believe in Him in this way.

However, we must know that we do not grasp anything of the reality and greatness of God by discourse, analogies, or speech—but, rather, by faith, piety, the fear of God, and the purity of the Spirit. If any human being hopes to grasp something of the greatness of God, one is seeking one's shadow, which can never be grasped! And if anyone presumes to render, with certainty, an account of God's determining power, it is as if one [claims to be able] to measure the water of the sea in the palm of one's hand![40] God (may His name be blessed and His remembrance exalted!) is by nature[41] too majestic and great for intellect or vision to grasp Him;[42] He [simply] cannot be grasped. This necessarily pertains to God Most High and Most Glorious *and* to His Word and His Spirit, since everything having to do with the reality of God is wonderful in itself and a cause for wonder.

We do not say that God begat[43] His Word as a human being begets—God forbid! Rather, we say that the Father begat His Word as the sun "begets" rays of light, as the intellect "begets" the word, or as a fire "begets" heat. None of these [the light, the word, or the heat] came before that from which they were "begotten." God (may His name be blessed!) was never without Word and Spirit; rather, God from eternity was with His Word and His Spirit. His Word and His Spirit were with God and in God before He created the creatures. Do not say: "How can this be?" For everything concerning the reality of God is a matter of greatness and omnipotence. Just as no human being is able to grasp anything of God, neither is one able to grasp the Word of God and His Spirit.

[Returning to the scriptures:] Also, God said in the Torah: "Let *Us* create the human according to *Our* likeness and pattern."*[44] God (may His name be blessed!) did not say, "*I* created the human" but, rather, "*We* created the human," in order that human beings might know that God, by His Word and His Spirit, created all things and gave life to all things. He is the All-Creating, the All-Knowing.

You will find it in the Qurʾan: "*We* created humanity in affliction,"[45] and "*We* opened the gates of heaven with water pouring down."[46] And it said:† "They shall come to *Us* individually, as *We* created them at first."[47] And it said: "Believe in God and His Word,"[48] and also, with regard to the Holy Spirit, "But the Holy Spirit shall reveal it from your Lord as mercy and guidance."[49]

What could be more clarifying and enlightening than this, when we find in the Torah, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the Gospel, and you [Muslims] find it in the Qurʾan, that God and His Word and His Spirit are one god and one Lord? You have been commanded to believe in God and His Word and His Spirit. So why do you fault us, O people, for believing in God and His Word and His Spirit, and worshipping God with His Word and His Spirit: one god, one Lord, and one Creator? God has announced clearly in all the scriptures that the matter is thus in [the way of] guidance and the religion of truth.[50] Whoever is at variance with this has nothing to stand on.

It is written in the Gospel that, when Christ was baptized in the holy river Jordan,[51] the Father bore witness from heaven and said: "This is My beloved Son, whom I desired;[52] listen to Him." And the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and rested upon Him, that people might know that God and His Word and His Spirit are one god and one Lord, in the first [witnesses] and the latter ones.‡

[In response to an objection occasioned by this example:] We do not say that God moved from His place, or that some part of Him separated from another part—God forbid! Rather, we say that God is fully perfect in heaven, and fully perfect in Christ, and fully perfect in every place. Do you not see that the sun, which God created to be illumination and light for the folk of the world, is in heaven, *and* in the valleys and mountains, *and* in the hills and seas? [Likewise, God] is not separated ["part" from "part"] and

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* Here and below the author stresses the *plural* pronouns referring to God in both the Torah and the Qurʾan. To him, this plural language provides scriptural evidence for the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

† The Christian author, while respectful and mostly accurate in his Qurʾan quotations, is careful *not* to introduce them with "God said . . .," as is often the case in Islamic texts.

‡ This probably means: in the older and in the more recent scriptures, that is, in the Torah and in the Gospel. Another possible translation of this final phrase is "from the beginning [of creation] till the end."

does not move from place to place but is where He wills and as He wills. He fills all things with His greatness and authority! Nothing is more majestic than He.

[Returning to scripture:] Likewise the prophet David when prophesying the baptism of Christ said: "The voice of the Lord is upon the water / God, who is praised, thundered / God upon the abundant water."[53] What [testimony of the Trinity] could be clearer than this prophecy of the baptism of Christ? The Father bore witness from heaven, the Son was upon the water, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. All that is one god and one [supreme] authority.

That is our faith and our testimony in God and His Word and His Spirit. He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: one god, and one Lord.

I.B. Christ

I.B.1. Why the Incarnation?

Introduction

As for Christ, He saved and rescued humanity. We shall make clear, God willing, how God sent His Word and Light as mercy and guidance to human beings, and through Him bestowed favor upon them, and why He came down from heaven for the salvation of Adam and his progeny from the Devil, from his darkness and misguidance.[54]

Adam and Eve (cf. Gen. 2–3)

God (may His name be blessed, sanctified, and exalted!) in His bounty, mercy, and greatness created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them in six days. He created Adam from dust; He breathed in him the breath of life,[55] and Adam became a living soul. Then He settled him in the Garden,[56] and from a rib created for him his spouse. He commanded them to eat from every tree in the Garden; but as for the Tree of [the Knowledge of] Good and Evil, they were not to eat of it: for the day that they ate of it, they would surely die.*

The Devil envied them and desired to expel them from God's glory. So he came to Eve, Adam's spouse, and said to her: "So God said, 'Do not eat of the Tree of Knowledge'? He knew that when you eat of it, the two of you shall become gods like Him!" The Devil made [this idea] attractive to them and deluded them.[57] Eve ate from [the Tree of Knowledge], and gave her

* While this paragraph follows the Genesis account (Gen. 2:7, 15–18, 21–22), the author characteristically uses vocabulary close to the parallel Qurʾanic accounts.

spouse to eat of it. Then they were made naked, and their shameful parts became manifest to them;[58] they covered themselves with fig leaves.[59]

Then God expelled them from the Garden, and they dwelt opposite it; and God made the wall of the Garden to be of fire.[60] Adam inherited rebellion, sin, and death, and [thenceforth] these ran in Adam's progeny. No human being—prophet or otherwise—was able to save Adam's progeny from rebellion, sin, and death.

Noah (cf. Gen. 6–8)

Between Adam and Noah there were ten patriarchs, totaling 2,270 years. Up to the time of Noah, [people] did not remember or worship God. Whoever among them loved and obeyed God [—].* Noah used to exhort them and call them to God, but they mocked and opposed him.[61]

Then, in the time of Noah, God brought the Flood upon the children of Adam and upon every beast. All the folk of the earth were drowned, but Noah and his household—they were eight souls[62]—were saved in the ship that God commanded him to build. And in the ship with him were [representatives] from every beast and every bird, as God had commanded him. Then, after a year, God brought Noah and his household out of the ship, and he inhabited the land with his sons and his household. He made an offering to God, and God accepted that offering.

Abraham and Lot (cf. Gen. 19)

Between Noah and Abraham the Good, whom God chose because of his obedience, there were ten patriarchs, totaling 1,200 years. Human beings were worshipping Satan (apart from God)[63] and committing forbidden acts and deeds of rebellion against God—except for the Friends of God, and they were few in their days! They used to warn [the people] and call them to God, but what they met from them was severe tribulation, open hostility from their relatives, and jealousy from the people.

Human beings became more evil than they had ever been: worse in deed and uglier in form. Evil busied humanity, and the work of the wicked Devil[64] appeared among them. The people of Sodom (where Abraham's nephew Lot had settled) did ugly, wicked, abominable deeds—and God destroyed them with a rain of fire and naphtha.[65] None of them were saved, [except that] God rescued Lot and his two daughters from destruction. Surely God is with those who fear Him[66] and who work righteousness!

* There is a lacuna in the text here.

Moses and the Children of Israel (cf. Exodus)

(Between Abraham and Moses the Prophet of God there were 430 years.)*[67]

Then Israel and his children entered Egypt; they were 75 souls, including men, women, and children. God caused them to multiply and grow until they reached 600,000 and more! Then there arose over Egypt another pharaoh who had not known Joseph. He divided them up and imposed harsh labor on them. He wanted to destroy the Children of Israel. (He made himself a god!)† He employed them in heavy construction projects and put them to the most extreme toil. He murdered their sons—but God saved Moses; Pharaoh's daughter raised him. The Children of Israel besought God to save them from their toil and from Pharaoh's hand.[68] And God responded to them and acquainted them with His mercy.

Moses departed Egypt in flight; God led him until he reached Mount Sinai. And He spoke to him directly,[69] from the right side of the mountain,[70] and said: "The laments of the Children of Israel have ascended to Me, and [news of] the exertions to which Pharaoh and his folk have put them."[71] And God sent Moses to Pharaoh, and supported him with signs [and] great wonders and mighty power. Then God split the sea for the Children of Israel and let them pass through the midst of it, while Pharaoh and his hosts drowned; God was Mighty, Lord of Vengeance.[72] And God guided them by night with a pillar of fire, and shaded them with clouds by day. He gave them manna and quails to eat, and bestowed favor upon them for forty years in the desolate land.[73]

In spite of all that, they rebelled against God and committed what was loathsome to the Lord. Satan did not desist from them until he had seduced them, and they worshipped the calf of gold (apart from God) while Moses was in the presence of God on Mount Sinai, receiving the Torah. God wanted to destroy the Children of Israel for their wicked deeds. But Moses entreated God and asked that He show forbearance towards them and free them from destruction. God accepted the intercession of His servant and prophet Moses, and showed forbearance towards them and freed them from death.[74]

Then God said to Moses and to the Children of Israel: "I will raise up for you a Prophet like [Moses]:[75] obey Him in everything that He commands

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* This is the last temporal indication in this section; so far, from Adam through Noah and Abraham to Moses we have 2,270 + 1,200 + 430 = 3,900 years. One might guess that the author intended to tell his readers that there were 1,600 years from Moses to Christ, in order to arrive at the traditional figure of 5,500 years between Creation and Incarnation.

† While the paragraph mostly summarizes the Biblical account (thus far, Exod. 1), Pharaoh's claim to divinity is an important feature of his portrayal in the Qurʾan: Qurʾan 26:29, 28:38, and 79:24.

you. Whoever does not obey Him, I shall wipe out his name and destroy him from among the Children of Israel."[76] (This Prophet is Christ, the Word of God and His Spirit,* whom God sent from heaven as mercy and guidance to the progeny of Adam, and for their salvation.) Then God took His prophet Moses; he had lived for 120 years.[77]

Satan's Ascendancy over Humankind

The Children of Israel returned to what was even more evil than before, worshipping Satan in every place without remembering God, and sacrificing their sons and daughters to Satan and his hosts. (That was after He had brought them into the land of Palestine, the Holy Land.) And God sent them His prophets and apostles; [indeed,] He multiplied prophets among them. They were exhorting them and calling them to God, making clear to them the work of Satan, his seduction and misguidance. But Satan gained ascendancy over the Children of Israel and over all humankind. He impoverished and tyrannized them, and took human beings as his slaves (apart from God). He seduced them and misguided them to every wicked deed, and incited people against God's prophets and apostles; he blinded their hearts so that they would not understand the speech of God's prophets. Some they murdered, some they stoned, and some they called liars. The Devil's work and misguidance appeared among every nation and people: they worshipped fire, idols, beasts, and trees; they worshipped serpents, sea-monsters, and all the beasts of the earth.

God's Response

God was not pleased with this for His creatures, for God is, towards His creatures, the Most Merciful of those who show mercy,[78] and the One most worthy to undertake their salvation and deliverance from the Devil's seduction and misguidance.

When God's prophets saw all that—that the children of Adam were headed for destruction, that Satan had gained ascendancy over them, and that no human was able to save Adam's progeny from misguidance and destruction—then God's prophets and apostles entreated God and asked that He descend to His creatures and worshippers and, in His mercy, undertake their salvation from Satan's misguidance.

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* The author here (and later) alludes to the Qurʾan's description of Jesus as "[God's] word and a spirit from Him" (Qurʾan 4:171), apparently without worrying about whether "Spirit of God" as a title for Jesus is consistent with his Trinitarian discourse.

One of them said: "Lord, bend heaven and come down to us!"[79] Another said: "[You who are] seated upon the cherubim, manifest Yourself to us! Raise up Your power, and come for our salvation!"[80] Another was saying: "Not an intercessor, nor an angel, but the Lord will come and save us."[81] Another prophesied and said: "God sent His Word, and He healed us of our toil and saved us."[82] Another prophesied and said: "He shall come openly, and shall not tarry."[83] The prophet David prophesied and said: "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! O God, our Lord, raise us up!"[84] He also said: "God shall come and shall not be silent. Fire shall devour before Him, and [—][85] to break out round about Him."[86]

What could be more clarifying and enlightening than this prophecy of Christ, when the prophets prophesied and said that He is God, Lord, and Savior? He is the One who came down from heaven as salvation for those who worship Him—but did not depart from the Throne: God and His Word and His Spirit are upon the Throne, and in every place, perfect without diminution. The heavens and the earth and all that is in them are filled with His glory.

When God saw that His creatures had fallen to their destruction,[87] that Satan had gained mastery over them, that every nation and people worshipped [Satan] {(apart from God), that His prophets were entreating Him to save Adam's progeny from the Devil's destruction and misguidance, and that the fall of Adam and his progeny was too severe for any human being to be able to free them and heal them of their wound—then God widened His mercy and freely bestowed His compassion upon them. He did not see fit (may His name be blessed and sanctified!) to allow His creatures to be lost. Nor did He see fit, having created human beings in His mercy, to abandon them to worship Satan (apart from Himself), to sacrifice their sons and daughters to idols, and to commit forbidden acts and deeds of rebellion against God.

The Devil vaunted himself over God's creatures, because he had defeated and enslaved them. No human being was able to save them from his hand. [Indeed,] God did not see fit to charge any human being with the salvation of Adam's son [*sic*] and his progeny. Therefore, God [Himself] undertook that [salvation] in His mercy, and saved them from the Devil's hands and his misguidance, in order that God be thanked, worshipped, and praised for His grace upon them and His favor, bounty, mercy, and salvation towards them. It was not appropriate that this salvation and great act of mercy be undertaken by a human being but, rather, by God. Thus it pleased God, in His mercy, compassion, and bounty, to undertake the salvation of His worshippers and creatures, in order that they might thank Him, worship Him, and

know that *God* is their Lord, the Most Merciful of those who show mercy to His creatures. And God was the Greater Knower[88] of these His creatures and their salvation.}[89]

How God Decided to Undo the Devil

If God (to Him be ascribed might and power!) had willed to destroy the Devil while upon the Throne, He would have done so! He is omnipresent and omnipotent: nothing that He wills in the heavens or on earth is impossible for Him! But the Devil had prostrated and seduced Adam, and bequeathed him death and rebellion. He drove him out of the Garden and vaunted himself over him and his progeny. The Wicked One presumed that he would always defeat and weary Adam's progeny, and that no one was able to save them from his misguidance. Thus it pleased God to destroy and overthrow him *by means of* this very humanity which had been seduced and enfeebled. (As [the Devil] saw it, he had destroyed [humanity] and cast it under [foot] through his rebellion against God.)

Thus God sent, from His Throne, His Word, who is from Himself—and saved Adam's progeny. He clothed Himself in this defeated, enfeebled humanity from Mary the Good, whom God elected over the women of the worlds,[90] and veiled Himself through her.*[91] He destroyed, conquered, and overthrew the Devil by means of [this defeated, enfeebled humanity], and left him feeble and contemptible, no [longer] vaunting himself over Adam's progeny, and severely distressed (when God defeated him by means of this humanity in which He had clothed Himself).[92]

If God had destroyed the Devil *without* having clothed Himself in this humanity (by means of which He overthrew him), the Devil would not have experienced distress or regret! For in that case, the Wicked One would have said: "I have prostrated, seduced, and driven out of the Garden the human being that God created by His hand, according to His resemblance and pattern. I have snatched him away from God and have bequeathed him {rebellion and death. If God has overcome me, there is nothing wonderful about that! God is omnipotent, the Doer of what He wills. Nothing that He wills is impossible for Him."[93] Therefore, God destroyed and overthrew the Devil by means of the humanity in which He clothed Himself, [taken] from us, in order that he *not* vaunt himself over Adam's progeny, because he had defeated and seduced them.

* The language of "veiling" is significant not only because of its previous use in Christological catechesis (in which Christ's divinity is "veiled" by His humanity) but also because of the overtones of Qurʾan 42:51: God may speak to a mortal "from behind a veil."

Thus it pleased God to put the Devil to shame and to enfeeble him, in order to make clear to human beings that he is a feeble, rebellious servant whom God cast out of heaven because of his rebellion, so that they do not fear him but rather despise him. [God] made His worshippers and obedient friends[94] deride and despise [the Devil]—when previously he had defeated and enslaved them!

See, O human, what God has done through us, and how He has propelled us into the Kingdom of Heaven! He overthrew the Devil and reduced him to the lowest rank; He left him feeble and in intense distress, seeing in us God's glory with which He has glorified us. He has propelled us to heaven through Christ, His Word and His Spirit, and made us, with His angels, to extol and magnify His great name.

The Annunciation and Virgin Birth

God sent His Word and Light to Mary, whom He chose from Adam's progeny as being pure and good. Gabriel, the chief of the angels, came to her and said: "Peace be upon you, O blessed one. The Lord is with you!}[95] You shall give birth to the Christ, the Savior of Israel."[96] Then Mary said: "How will I have a son, when no mortal has touched me?"[97] Gabriel said: "The Spirit of God shall descend upon you, and the power of the Most High shall dwell within you. The One born of you shall be called 'Holy, the Son of the Most High.' And you are blessed among women!"[98] (Who is a more truthful witness than Gabriel, the chief of the angels, who stands beside the Throne and is sent with every [message of] good news and prophecy from God?)

Christ was born from Mary, the purified, by [the power of] the Holy Spirit, without any mortal having touched her. [He is] god from god, light from [God's] light, His Word and Spirit. [He is] fully human with soul and body, but without sin. Mary remained a virgin after she gave birth to Him. If Christ were not god and light from God, Mary would not have remained a virgin after she gave birth to Him; but she gave birth to the Light and Word of God, as mercy, guidance, and salvation for His creatures.

The Fruit of the Incarnation

[Christ] saved Adam and his progeny from the Devil's misguidance. He raised Adam from his stumbling, healed his wound, renewed his decrepit condition, and repaired his brokenness. He delivered him and his progeny from the hands of the Devil, abolished his darkness and tyranny, and emancipated us from slavery to Satan. He crucified sin by His crucifixion, killed

death (which Adam inherited through rebellion) by His death, and showed forth the resurrection. He established truth, righteousness, and guidance by His mercy, His favor towards the people and [all] God's creatures, and His light among the people. He made His greatness clear to them and taught them to worship God and His Word and His Spirit, one god and one Lord.

Know that Christ did not descend from heaven for His own salvation, for He was Word and Spirit with God from before all time, and the angels were praising God and His Word and His Spirit, one Lord who sanctifies all things.* Rather, He descended in mercy to Adam and his progeny, for their salvation from the Devil and his misguidance. He did not depart from the Throne, from being with God; He is god from God, in heaven, managing the affairs [of the universe] and having mercy upon His creatures, as He wills.

From I.B.2: A Passage on the True Religion

[After Christ's Ascension,] the disciples[99] went out and divided the entire world among themselves. They preached good news of the Kingdom of Heaven and of repentance upon the name of Christ. They performed all the miracles[100] by the Holy Spirit: they healed every illness and disease, cast out demons from the children of Adam, and raised the dead in the name of Christ. They abolished idols and the worship of the Devil from among the children of Adam. The Light and Truth of God appeared among all the nations, whom they guided to the worship and obedience of God.

They were only twelve men: poor, feeble, and strangers among the people. They had no sovereignty, worldly authority, or wealth with which to bribe anyone; no [special] knowledge or kinship relations to offer anyone. {But Christ was with them—He who is better than the entire world and mightier than it in authority!—empowering and strengthening them by the Holy Spirit. He was showing them His light and glory in every place and time. And thus they brought guidance to all the nations, from the East and from the West, in the name of Christ, and delivered them from the Devil's misguidance and seduction.

They did not fight anyone or coerce people [to belief], so that the Truth and Guidance might appear. But people fought them: the Jews opposed [?][101] them from one side, and idol-worshipping pagans from another. Yet through them God made His Light victorious over the darkness, His Guidance over misguidance, and His Truth over futility.

* The blending of John 1:1 ("the Word was with God") and Qurʾan 4:171 (Jesus as "[God's] word and a spirit from Him") here leads to a rather awkward sentence, in which the word "Spirit" changes meaning, referring initially to the *second*, and then to the *third* Person of the Trinity.

If this religion had not truly been from God, it would not have been established and would not have stood firm for 746 years![*] The nations were fighting it but were not able to abolish a religion that God had raised up and fashioned.

By my life, surely in this is a lesson[102] for the one who desires to reflect and know the truth.}[103]

From II.A: On the Life of Christ
A Testimony from Isaiah (19:1)

Isaiah also prophesied by the Holy Spirit and said: "This is the Lord, seated upon a light cloud. He shall come to Egypt and shake the idols of Egypt."[104]

Christ entered into Egypt, clothed in a pure body from Mary, whom God purified. By this He glorified us, as a king glorifies his servant when he clothes him in his garment.[105] He is the One who shook the idols of Egypt and abolished from it the work of Satan. He guided [the people of Egypt] away from the Devil's misguidance to God's truth and gainful way of life,[106] and caused His Light to shine in their hearts.[†107]

Look, Egypt was not saved from the worship of idols and the Devil's misguidance except when Christ in His mercy walked there and broke forth upon them with His Light. Give understanding, O human, to the prophets' prophecy and to the work of Christ! See how beautiful is the correspondence between Christ's works and the prophets' prophecy![‡]

A Comment on a Testimony from Daniel (9:24)

[God] put a seal on all inspiration and prophecy that had existed among the Children of Israel from the days of Moses until Christ came, the Holy One of the Holy One.[108] God abolished the sovereignty and prophecy of the Children of Israel, and put a seal on that. Thus, Christ said to the disciples and to the Children of Israel: "No prophet spoke to them"—from the time that Christ came, the Holy One of the Holy One, until this our own day.[§109]

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* On the significance of this passage for the dating of the text, see the introduction to this chapter.

† The text is speaking about the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt shortly after Christ's birth (Matt. 2:13–21). According to the tradition, the idols of Egypt were miraculously shattered when the newborn Christ arrived there.

‡ Note how the author finds delight in the "rhyming" of Old and New Testaments through the hermeneutical device of prophecy and fulfillment.

§ In addition to the anti-Jewish tenor of this passage, the author probably also had Islam in mind: if with Christ, God has "put a seal on" prophecy, this leaves no room for the prophethood of Muhammad, who according to the Qurʾan 33:40) is "the Seal of the Prophets."

If Christ had not been god from God, Christ would not have been called the Holy One from the Holy One, and sovereignty and prophecy would not have been abolished among the Children of Israel when they opposed Him and did not follow His word.[110] And [God] gave Him another nation, as He said—and His word is true.

A Comment on a Testimony from Isaiah (35:3–6a)

[After seeing Jesus' healings,][*] many people believed in Him.

It is thus that God desires people's faith. He does not desire that anyone believe in Him through coercion. Truly, there is no reward in coercion! Rather, God desires that people believe in Him voluntarily. Then God will owe them their reward in truth.[†]

A Testimony from Habakkuk (3:3)

[Habakkuk] prophesied by the Holy Spirit and said: "God comes from Tayman, the Holy One from a dark shaded mountain." This is an unequivocally clear prophecy, where God clearly announced by the tongues of His prophets the place from which the Christ would come and the one from whom He would be born, when His Word and Light came forth for the sake of humanity. Surely, "Tayman" is Bethlehem, which is to the south (*yamīn*) of Jerusalem. The "dark shaded mountain" is holy Mary, whom God caused the Holy Spirit to overshadow, and within whom dwelt the Power of God.[111]

This is as Gabriel, chief of the angels, said after Mary had said to him, "How will I have a son, when no mortal has touched me?"[112] Gabriel said to her, "The Holy Spirit shall descend upon you, and the power of God shall dwell within you."[113] God brings the saying of His prophet and of His angel Gabriel into conformity, when they speak this word about the Christ; their word is true! They clearly announced to people from what place Christ was to come and from whom He would be born, and that He is God who comes for the salvation and guidance of His creatures.

Praise be to God who created us! We accept and believe in the word of His angels and prophets concerning the Christ.

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* The author presents several stories of Jesus' healings as fulfillments of the prophecy in Isa. 35:3–6a.

† This brief comment emphasizes a point that was made earlier in the passage on "the true religion": the true religion does not spread by means of coercion. Many Arab Christian apologists believed that a clear contrast could here be made between the earliest spread of Christianity and that of Islam.

From II.B: On Baptism
John the Baptist

John the son of Zechariah,[114] a prophet son of a prophet, was the one to whom Christ bore witness when He said to the children of Israel: "Amen, amen I say to you, there is no one born of women who is greater than John the son of Zechariah, the Baptist."[115] That is because he baptized Christ; he heard the Father's voice from heaven when He bore witness and said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I take delight"; and he saw the Holy Spirit descend from heaven and rest upon Christ.[116]

Christ said, "One who is little in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he."[117] [He said] that . . . in order that people know that one who is small among the folk of heaven is greater than one who is great among the folk of earth, so that people seek the Kingdom of Heaven and forsake the world and what is in it.

A mention of John the son of Zechariah is written in the Qur'an, which said: "There Zechariah prayed to his Lord and said, 'Lord, give me from Your bounty goodly progeny—for truly You hear prayer.' Then the angels called to him while he was standing and praying in the sanctuary: 'God gives you good tidings of John, as confirmation of a word from God; lordly, chaste, a prophet from among the righteous.'"[118]

And he bore witness [to Christ].

From II.C: On the Cross
Beginning of the Chapter: A Testimony from Moses

And this is what God's prophets prophesied concerning the crucifixion of Christ, through which He redeemed us from the Devil's misguidance and works.[119] [In the first place] it was Moses who prophesied [concerning this], to whom God spoke and caused his face to blaze [so that] none of the Children of Israel were then able to look at his face.[120] He prophesied concerning the crucifixion of Christ and said to the Children of Israel in the Torah, which God revealed[121] to him: "You shall see your Life hanging before your eyes, and you shall not believe."*[122] What Life was hanging before the eyes of the Children of Israel, in which they did not believe, other than the Light of God?

So understand what the prophets have prophesied by the Holy Spirit concerning Christ, who was crucified, and who by His crucifixion crucified sin and destroyed the Devil.

* While unfamiliar to many readers today, this verse (Deut. 28:66) in the form found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint) was frequently offered as a testimony to Christ's crucifixion in early Christian literature.

End of the Chapter: On Christ's Return

Then [Christ] said: "Amen, amen I say to you: as the lightning is in heaven and is seen from the east to the west, so will be the coming of Christ from heaven with His angels."[123] And you shall see a "sign" before Him,[124] like the lightning which is in heaven.

The sole sign of Christ is His cross,[125] by which He overthrew the Devil and destroyed his authority; and for His friends He has made it a sign by which they are known by all the people. By my life, all the people of the folk of the earth have learned that the Christians have no sign except the cross, by which we are known both [here] on earth and with Christ on the Day of Resurrection, when He comes to judge the living and the dead according to their works.

On that day the Jews shall be astounded, those who did not . . . [*Here the text breaks off.*]

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Chapter 2

Theodore Abu Qurra

ثاودورس أبو قرة

John C. Lamoreaux

In the south of modern-day Turkey, not far from the Syrian border, near the ancient city of Edessa, lies the town of Harran. It was there, we read in Genesis, that Abraham stopped while on his way from Ur of the Chaldeans to the land of Canaan. There, too, Isaac and Jacob are said to have taken their wives. While this village is not much to look at today, it was of immense cultural significance in the early Middle Ages. A home to Jews, Muslims, and Christians, to pagans and to heretics, it was a town alive with religious controversy. It was a place where theologians met and fought, both with each other and with the theologians of antiquity. It was a place where ancient traditions of learning were transformed—translated from Greek and Syriac into Arabic. There, too, those same traditions were still practiced. While paganism had died out elsewhere in the early medieval Middle East, it remained a vital tradition in Harran.[1] There an illustrious series of scholarly families devised an amalgam of ancient Babylonian paganism and Neoplatonism and sought to make it intelligible to a world transformed by monotheism. Living in Harran, among the adherents of these many religions, was a small community of Orthodox Christians. Caring for the souls of this community in the late eighth and early ninth centuries was its bishop, Theodore Abu Qurra.

Theodore is a figure well known to specialists in the study of Arab Christian literature—and for good reason. He was both one of the first Christians to write in Arabic[2] and one of the first to undertake a sustained theological defense of Christianity against the rival claims of Islam.

We know remarkably little about Theodore's life.[3] Though the evidence is slight, it is likely that he was a native of Edessa, a large town just to the north of Harran. He was born toward the middle of the eighth century, to judge from the fact that he was a mature theologian by the early decades

of the ninth century. It is usually suggested that Theodore spent his early years, and perhaps his later years as well, as a monk at the famous Palestinian monastery of Mar Saba. As has been argued elsewhere,[4] this is unlikely. Evidence supporting such monastic connections is far from strong. While no dependable source presents Theodore as a monk at the monastery of Mar Saba, a vast number of sources, both Christian and Muslim, remember him to have been the bishop of Harran. It is usually suggested—wrongly, I think—either that he occupied his see for a short time, only to be deposed, or that he was ordained bishop of Harran, was deposed, and took up the reins of authority again at a later date. Such claims are based on a single source, one that is late, hostile, and otherwise ill informed about Theodore's life and theology.[5] By contrast, we do know for certain that Theodore went to Armenia and there debated with the Miaphysite theologian Nonnus of Nisibis, at the court of the Bagratid prince Ashot Msakeri (d. 826)—an event that took place between 813 and 817, most likely toward the end of that period. The last reference to Theodore in the historical record is the Arabic translation of pseudo-Aristotle's *De virtutibus animae*, which he produced for the Muslim general and governor of Khorasan (northeastern Iran), probably in 816. Theodore must have died not very long after this.[6]

The corpus of Theodore's surviving works is large. It includes an extensive collection of Arabic works, almost all fairly substantial.[7] Also published are more than forty Greek treatises,[8] including a few substantial freestanding treatises, in one case a translation from Arabic into Greek,[9] the remainder being fairly short, seemingly fragments of larger treatises now lost. Yet other published Greek works bearing his name were not in fact written by Theodore. They are, rather, records of debates in which he participated.[10] Besides these Arabic and Greek works, Theodore is also known to have written at least one work in Syriac: a massive defense of the Council of Chalcedon, which, to the best of our knowledge, has not been preserved.[11] Finally, there exist Georgian versions of almost all of Theodore's Greek works, of which a few have been published.[12] In addition to these published works, a fair number of unedited works by Theodore are preserved in Greek, Arabic, and Georgian.[13]

In his attempt to articulate and defend his faith in a milieu transformed by Islam, Theodore was forced to rethink the foundations of Christian theology. Whereas in earlier centuries the Orthodox had sometimes been overly eager to point to the political success of their faith as a guarantor of its truth, this was not so easy once Islam had subjugated much of the territory that had once belonged to the Byzantine Empire. Many Orthodox, perhaps the majority, found themselves, nearly overnight, subject to the rule of a

proselytizing and assertive foreign religion. Moreover, dispossessed of their empire, they were no longer adherents of an imperial faith but merely one sect living alongside a number of others. In such a context, how was one to articulate and defend Orthodoxy against other sects of Christianity and against other religions, especially Islam? It was to questions such as these that the bishop of Harran sought answers.

Translated here is a text emblematic of some of Theodore's main theological concerns, in particular, his quest to determine how to discern the true religion.[14] Among his different strategies is what the Western churches have traditionally called "natural theology": a method in which the human mind sets aside divine revelation and attempts by itself to determine whether God exists, and if so, what He is like. Theodore pursues this question not as an abstract matter. He considers it, instead, the best way to adjudicate between the competing claims of the various religions of the early medieval Middle East. The text translated below is untitled but has been called *Theologus Autodidactus* ("Self-taught theologian"), in homage to the traditional Latin titles of two somewhat similar works from the Muslim theological tradition: *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* (Alive the Son of Awake) by Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185) and *al-Risala al-Kamiliyya fi al-Sira al-Nabawiyya* (The Letter of Kamil on the Biography of the Prophet) by Ibn al-Nafis (d. 1285), both of which are philosophical and theological novels about children growing up without contact with others who yet are able to deduce the basic truths of philosophy, and to differing degrees theology, through reason alone. Theodore's text constitutes the second part of the lengthy treatise *Maymar fi wujud al-Khaliq wa-l-din al-qawim* (Treatise on the Existence of God and the True Religion), a name given the work by its editors rather than its author.[15]

Theodore begins by imagining himself to have grown up all alone on a mountain. When one day he descends to civilization, he is confronted by adherents of the various religions of the early medieval Middle East: the pagans of Harran, Zoroastrians, Manicheans, Jews, Samaritans, Christians, Muslims, and so on. Each group claims to possess the true revelation of God. At the same time, each declares all the others to have gone astray. One of these must be the true religion, Theodore reasons, for God would not have left all of humanity to wander in error. Confronted by these rival claimants, however, how is the earnest seeker to discern the true religion? Theodore compares such a seeker to the son of a king appointed by his father to rule a distant land. When this son falls gravely ill, his father sends medicaments and a letter by messenger. The king has enemies, however, and they seek to do injury to the king by sending messengers and letters of their own, each with a poison to kill the son. Approached by this crowd

of messengers, each claiming to have been sent by his father, what is the unfortunate son to do? How is he to determine which of these messengers had truly been sent by his father? The son's dilemma—and the dilemma of humanity as a whole—is that there is seemingly no sure way to distinguish between true and false messengers.

In the present treatise Theodore seeks to find a way to escape the son's dilemma, to devise a method that would differentiate between true and false messengers. In doing so, he does not start with the messengers of the rival religions or with the content of their messages. Theodore reasons, instead, that one must begin by examining human beings: "We must lay the scriptures to one side," he argues, and turn our attention to "human nature." When we understand human nature, then "we shall compare those scriptures that are in our possession."[16] If one of those books teaches a religion that accords with our nature, it will be established that it is from God. Theodore in effect proposes that humans are by nature religious beings and that one can determine which religion is true by determining which religion most aptly conforms to human nature. In this regard Theodore's quest is governed throughout by the fundamental conviction that human attributes mirror, if dimly, divine attributes. Human attributes that are noble and excellent have counterparts in God and can thus be predicated of Him. At the same time, human attributes that are ignoble must be denied of the divine nature. Theodore is convinced that it is possible to infer from human nature not only God's attributes but also some understanding of the character of divine love, and thus, the object of religion itself.

Again relying on the resemblance between divine and human attributes, Theodore reasons that human beings, if forced to examine themselves, instinctively consider selfless love to be the ideal. Such love commands us to treat others as we would have them treat us, to put others above ourselves, and to forgo retaliation. If human beings are such, must not the divine nature also be such, only more so? Human love, in fact, simply mirrors divine love, which seeks to make human love ever more like itself. In much the same way, Theodore continues, human nature can teach us some things about the reasons for which we were created. Human nature strives for permanence, stability, fullness of knowledge, for mercy, and for kindness; it seeks to love all and be loved by all. The object of such desires is nothing less than participation in God Himself and the deification of human nature.[17] This indicates that human nature was designed to enjoy God and ultimately to become infused by the divine nature and to become ever more similar to it. This, for human beings, constitutes perfect felicity and is the object of all desire. Having examined human nature and inferred from it some things

about the nature of its Creator, the character of divine love, and the ultimate object of our spiritual strivings, Theodore goes on to subject the rival religions to examination in order to discover which, if any, teaches a doctrine that accords with the inner workings of human nature. One religion alone, Theodore concludes, accords with human nature, and that is Christianity.

For Theodore, it was not just religions like Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Islam that were defective when viewed from the perspective of reason. Judaism, too, according to him, fell short. Indeed, as Theodore saw it, Judaism was little different from those other faiths that he had rejected for their laxity, tribalism, and appeal to material passions. Theodore must then face the charge that he rejects Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament. Theodore does not flinch. He takes his argument to its logical conclusion:

> With regard to reason, we do not think that it should be accepted that Moses was from God. The same holds for what the other [Hebrew] prophets brought. This is because of the defects in what they brought and because it is contrary to what our nature teaches.[18]

Despite this, however, Theodore was not some latter-day Marcionite.* He did accept the Old Testament. He certainly believed that Moses and the other prophets of the first covenant had been sent by God. However, his recognition of Moses was not based on a rational investigation (as Theodore argued, a purely rational investigation would lead one, to the contrary, to rejecting Moses). It was based, instead, on Christ's retroactive validation of the prophets of the Old Testament. Thus, Theodore turns on its head the traditional Christian argument from prophecy. Whereas many early Christian authors had suggested that Christ was to be believed because He had been predicted by the prophets of the Old Testament, Theodore suggests that Moses and the other Hebrew prophets were to be believed for no other reason than that Christ acknowledged their authority.

Now if Moses was sent by God, as Theodore is forced to admit, how then to explain the defects of Judaism? Theodore's answer was to view Judaism from an "evolutionary" perspective. It was revealed at a time when humanity was not yet ready for the fullness of God's truth. Because of the dangers of idolatry, for instance, God could not risk disclosing that His nature was triune; because people were addicted to sin, He could only enjoin them to turn away from evil but could not yet begin to urge them

* Marcion was a second-century Christian heretic who rejected all of the Old Testament, believing that it was a revelation from the "just" (but not good) god, different from the good God who revealed Himself only through Jesus Christ.

to good; because their hearts were immersed in desire for the world and sought only immediate gratification, God could not yet hold out the hope of eternal life but had to be content with enticing the Israelites with promises of an earthly kingdom in Palestine. In the end there remains an uncomfortable dissonance in Theodore's treatment of Judaism, and all he can do is take refuge in his assertion: "If not for the Gospel . . . we would not believe that Moses is from God. Indeed, on the basis of reason, we would reject him most earnestly."[19]

There were many other topics to which Theodore devoted his attention: the defense of icons, theological epistemology, whether and to what extent human beings have free will, and so on. In most cases, however, Theodore was concerned with these topics because they served his larger concern for the discernment of the true religion. This is the heart of Theodore's theology, and it is to this issue that he returns again and again, even in his other, ancillary works. Indeed, it was with regard to this central issue that Theodore believed that he had broken new ground, that he had, at last, found a way to navigate the turbulent seas stirred up by the coming of Islam.

The present translation is based on Ignace Dick's excellent edition of the text. He has faithfully reproduced his manuscript. Moreover, when departing from it, he always recorded the testimony of his manuscript. A number of important emendations to Dick's text have been proposed by Monnot,[20] almost all of which I have adopted. I also occasionally deviated from Dick's text in other ways, sometimes by not adopting its conjectural supplements and deletions, sometimes through emendation of the received text. My corrections to Dick's edition are noted in full in the translation of this text, published in 2005 as part of Theodore Abu Qurra's collected works. The translation presented here reproduces that earlier translation, with some minor exceptions.* A number of small changes were introduced in order to bring the translation into accord with the stylistic requirements of the present volume. I have also broken most of Theodore's long paragraphs into smaller, more manageable ones and smoothed down a number of passages that had originally been translated rather literally. Lastly, I have omitted all of the more technical annotations, including (as just mentioned) those that record my conjectural emendations. It is hoped that these minor changes will have resulted in a translation that is more readable but no less accurate.[21]

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* Both author and editors wish to thank Brigham Young University Press for granting permission to reprint the translation.

Translation

I grew up on a mountain where I knew no other people. One day, a certain need compelled me to descend to civilization and to the community of my fellow human beings, and I observed that they adhered to a variety of religions. One sect, adherents of the religion of the first Hanifs,* invited me to join their religion. They say that they worshipped the seven stars (the sun and the moon, Saturn, Mars, Jupiter, Mercury, and Venus) and the twelve zodiacal signs. This is because it is these that create and govern this world, dispensing good luck and prosperity in it as well as bad luck and hardship. Their prophet, who told them about such things, is Hermes the Wise.[22]

I left them and was met by some Magians.† They said, "Don't pay them any attention! They're not correct! Join us instead, as we have the truth." They say that their great god is called Zurvan (that is, Fortune). Before the world was created, he offered sacrifices for a thousand years that he might have a son, and his wife conceived a son named Hormazd. Nine hundred years after his conception Zurvan, his father, began to doubt that [the son] had in fact been conceived. His doubt caused there to be in his wife's womb another son (that is, Satan). Zurvan realized what had happened and said, "I'll give my sovereignty to whichever of my children is first to see my face." While still in his mother's womb, Hormazd learned of this and informed Satan of it. On learning of it, Satan pierced his mother's womb and came forth from her side. He came and stood before his father. He was darkness, black of face, and loathsome. His father said to him, "Who are you?" He replied, "I'm your son Satan, who arose from your doubt. Give me sovereignty as you promised." At this Zurvan was sad. Because he did not want to go back on his word, however, he gave him sovereignty over this world for nine thousand years. At the end of a thousand years, his mother gave birth to Hormazd, who came forth as lovely and beautiful light. He created the heaven and the earth, as well as the diverse intermediate elements.

Notwithstanding that loveliness and beauty were to be seen in the world, it was dark and had no source of light. Hormazd was thus sad and took counsel with Satan, who suggested that he should marry his mother, which he did. He had sex with her and she conceived and bore the sun, for the light of the day. Satan also suggested that he should marry his sister, which he did. He had sex with her and she conceived and bore the moon, for the light of the night. It is for this reason that Magians marry their mothers, sisters, and daughters, that

* In the present context, "Hanifs" refers to the pagans in and around Harran. Their religion consisted of a mixture of ancient Babylonian astral cult and Neoplatonism.

† More properly, adherents of Zurvanism, the official form of Zoroastrianism during the Sasanid period.

they might bear children like the sun and the moon, even as Hormazd their god.[23] This then is a description of their gods. Like Hormazd, they are permitted, in whatever way pleases them, to indulge their worldly desires. Indeed, it was for the sake of these desires that Hormazd created them. Their prophet, whom they say brought them this truth, is Zoroaster.

I left them and was met by some Samaritans. They said to me, "Pay them no regard! Join us instead, as we alone have the truth. We are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the beloved of God, the God of heaven and earth. He promised our fathers that He would deliver their seed from the land of Egypt and make them inherit the land of Palestine. This is in fact what happened. It took place at the hands of the prophet Moses. God sent him to Pharaoh and struck both Pharaoh and the people of Egypt with well-known wonders and signs and then brought forth our fathers from Pharaoh's hands by force. He parted the sea for them. He drowned Pharaoh and his armies. He led our fathers into the desert. He fed them with manna and quails. He made water flow from the rock. He gave them the divine law and declared for them the permitted and the forbidden. He destroyed the people of Palestine and gave their lands to our fathers. We are their children, even until today. As long as we keep His law, He is kind to us. When we disobey it, He punishes us and makes us suffer distress in this world. Those of us who do good have a pleasant life in this world; those who do bad, distress. When we leave this world, there is everlasting destruction* and no resurrection."

I left them and was met by some Jews. They said, "Pay them no regard! Don't join them, for they are in error! As for what they told you, that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that He gave them such promises concerning their seed, that He sent Moses and led them out of Egypt into the land of Canaan—all this really happened. As for what they said about being the seed of Abraham and Israel, this is a lie. No! They are the offspring of Magians.[24] It is we who are the seed of Abraham and Israel. In truth, it was our fathers that God made to inherit the land of Israel. For fifteen hundred years they dwelt there, in incomparable prosperity. They then sinned, and God grew angry with them and delivered them into the hands of the Gentiles, who exiled them from it. God promised our fathers, however, that He would send us the Christ, who would gather us from the ends of the earth into the land of Palestine, who would make us respected as we were initially, who would give us power over the Gentiles. He promised, too, that He would raise our dead and also gather them into that land and that He would command the earth to give us bread that is already baked, forever and ever.[25] God does not lie; this is what will happen. It is for this

* Meaning, the dead are blotted out of existence.

that we wait. Don't join anyone but us, for ours is the only true religion."

I left them and was met by some Christians. They said, "Don't let what the Jews say lead you astray. God has already sent this Christ about whom they speak. When they didn't accept Him, God became angry with them and scattered them to the ends of the earth. They have nothing to look forward to but ruin, forever and ever; their hope is in vain. You should adhere to the religion of Christ and to His teaching, that is, that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, three persons, and in this essence a single God. This is the true religion. It was given us by Christ, the Son of God, in the Gospel. He also declared for us the permitted and the forbidden and promised to raise the dead, rewarding those who did good with the kingdom of heaven and punishing those who did evil with hell. The only true religion is ours. Let no one deceive you."

I left them and was met by some Manicheans, who are also called Zindiqs.* They said, "Beware! Don't follow the Christians or listen to the words of their Gospel. We have the true Gospel, the one that the twelve apostles wrote. The only true religion is ours, and we are the only Christians. Our master Mani alone understands how to interpret the Gospel. He taught us as follows: 'Before the world was created, there were two gods. These differed in essence. One was light and good (that is, the good god). The other was wicked and darkness (that is, Satan). In the beginning, each was in his own domain. The darkness then noticed the luminous one, as well as his beauty and his loveliness. Out of desire for him, he attacked him and fought with him, wanting to capture him. The luminous one sought to fight against him, but soon the darkness was on the point of victory. When the luminous one came to fear for himself, he cut off a piece of himself and threw it to him. This the darkness swallowed. Heaven and earth, as well as what is between them, is made—by way of mingling—from the nature of the darkness and from the piece that the luminous one threw to him.'"

The human being, for instance, is created from an internal soul and an external body, and they suggest that the soul is from the nature of the luminous one, while the body is from the nature of Satan, the dark one. The same holds with regard to the state of things. Everything in them that is good and pleasant is from the nature of the luminous one. Everything that is bad and harmful is from the nature of the dark one. For instance, water drowns those who are submerged in it but gives life and pleasure to those who drink it. The part that gives life is from the luminous one, while what drowns and destroys is from the darkness. As for snakes, scorpions, lions,

* A traditional Muslim designation for either Manicheans (a now extinct gnostic world religion founded by Mani in the third century CE) or atheist materialists.

panthers, creeping things, and the like, all these are from the darkness. This is the essence of their religion and of how they describe their gods.

As for the permitted and the forbidden, they pander to the worldly desires of those who wish to live a life of pleasure. They are not commanded to get married. Rather, whoever desires a woman can have her, and the same holds for women with regard to men. In fact, this is how they interpret the Gospel, suggesting that, when Christ said, "Give to whoever asks,"[26] He did not mean that when the poor ask for alms, you should give to them. Because it was God who caused the poor to have misery in this world, no one is allowed to give them anything, not even alms. If we do, we disobey God, who, if He desires, makes them wretched, and who, if He desires, makes them prosperous. If God had wished to make them prosperous, He would have given them wealth in the same way that He gave it to the one from whom alms were being asked and would not have caused them to be needy. As concerns their interpretation of Christ's words, "Give to whoever asks," this has to do with men and women. He is saying to the woman, "If a man asks you for yourself, don't refuse him," and to the man, "If a woman asks you for yourself, give yourself to her." This and the like do they teach with regard to the permitted and the forbidden and with regard to matters of divinity.

I left them and was met by some Marcionites.* They said, "Don't join them! Their error is great! Join us instead, as we have the true Gospel. About it and its interpretation our master Marcion was the most knowledgeable. He described and taught us matters of divinity. He said that there are three gods. One is jealous and just with regard to one's due. He does not tolerate sin. For those who do sin, he has neither indulgence nor mercy, only their deserved punishment. This is the god of the Old Testament, the one who sent Moses and did certain deeds in Egypt. The second god is good, merciful, and beneficent. He abounds in kindness and punishes no one. This god is Christ. The third is dark and wicked, the pinnacle of all evil. This god is Satan."

I left them and was met by Bardaisan.† He said to me, "Don't listen to them! They're not correct! Join me instead, for I have the truth. I tell you that there are five eternal gods: four with no intellect, one with. The one with intellect, because he has intellect, is stronger than the other four and conquered them, and from them created the world. These four without intellect are fire,

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* Followers of the second-century heretic Marcion, mentioned above. The particular form of Marcionism at issue here is that which posited a divine Triad, with one deity good, another just, and another wicked. While there was much variation in the theology of later Marcionism, this view seems to have been predominant.

† A Syriac Christian poet and philosopher who died ca. 222 CE. The present description of his teachings is very unlike other descriptions stemming from the early Middle Ages, whether Muslim or Christian.

air, water, and earth. It was the one with intellect who through his wisdom fashioned from them the elements of the world."

I left them and was met, lastly, by some Muslims. They said, "Don't listen to any of those you just met! They're just a bunch of infidels who associate partners with God. The only true religion is Islam, which God sent to all people through His prophet Muhammad, who summons you to worship God alone and to associate nothing with Him. He has charged you with the permitted and the doing of good and forbade you from the forbidden and the doing of evil. He has promised to raise the dead. For those who do good, the reward is paradise. From underneath it, there will flow forth rivers of water, milk, honey, and wine—a delight for those who drink. In it, for pleasure, there will be women with black eyes, ones that neither jinn nor men have touched, as well as whatever other good things a person desires, in castles of emerald, ruby, gold, and silver, and so on, for ever and ever. For those who do evil, He has promised hell, the fires of which are not extinguished."[27]

Parable of the Hidden King

After meeting all these people, I began to reflect on what each had said and realized that all of them both agreed and disagreed about three things. As for what they agreed on, each claims to have a god, to have something permitted and forbidden, and to have a reward and a punishment—with one or two exceptions. As for what they disagreed on, they disagree with one another as to the attributes of their gods, as to what is permitted and forbidden, and as to what the reward and the punishment will be.

Again, I reflected: Because God is kind and generous, when He saw His creation deviating from the true worship, He would have sent them messengers and a book, both in order to show them the true worship and to return them to it from their sins. And yet, there are many messengers and many books, and they disagree with one another! One of two things must be the case: either not even one of these messengers has come from God, or there is among them just one true messenger. Because of what we know about God's generosity and about how He cares for His creation, the latter must be the case. But how to recognize this one true messenger?

It was then that I realized that my situation was like that of a king's son, one with a father who was hidden and veiled, whom no one had ever seen, apart from his closest and most intimate friends. When a need arose in a certain country, he sent his young son to take care of it. To protect him from disease, he also sent one of his physicians, whom he appointed his son's vizier. (Neither the son nor the physician had ever seen the king.) The youth

went to that land, where he neglected the physician and fell gravely ill.

On learning of this, the father's love for his son would permit him neither to leave him in this state nor to neglect him. He thus wrote his son a letter. In it, he spoke of three matters. First, he described himself. Secondly, he described for the youth his disease and what habits had brought it about, forbidding him also from continuing to practice them. Thirdly, he described for him a medicine and how it would heal him, as well as how to conduct himself in the future in order to enjoy health and ceaseless felicity, so that no illness might befall him ever again. He also ordered him to continue drinking that medicine even after he had regained his health. The king then summoned one of his messengers and gave him the letter, ordering him to travel to his son and deliver it. The messenger took the letter and set off to take it to the youth.

The king had many enemies, and there were many people who envied him. Because of his might, however, there was no way for them to harm him. When they learned that the king's son had taken ill, that his father was disturbed by this, and that he had thus sent to his son a messenger and a letter—when they learned of this, I say, in that they had now discovered how to hurt the king through his son, each of them quickly got ready a messenger and forged a letter in the king's name. In these letters, they described the king, but falsely, and forbade the king's son from what is helpful, while at the same time ordering him to do what is harmful. They also sent him a medicine, which would kill him if he drank it. Their messengers took the letters and began their journey, catching up with the king's true messenger before he could deliver his letter.

Arriving together at the residence of the king's son, the messengers delivered their letters. On reading them, the king's son found that they all disagreed with one another—about the description of the king, about what his father had commanded and forbade, and even about the medicines. He thus summoned them. When they had come into his presence, one of them began by saying, "I'm the king's messenger, and his is the letter I delivered." Another said, "He's a liar. He's not the king's messenger. I'm his messenger, and his is the letter I delivered." Another said, "They're both liars. I'm the king's messenger." They thus began to declare one another and all the others to be liars, while at the same time affirming themselves to be the true messengers. As for the true messenger, he was right there among them, declaring them liars and being declared by them to be a liar. He had become as one of them, with nothing to set him apart.

The king's son was confused, not knowing whom to believe. The physician then said to him, "Send them away for now. I'll find a way to distinguish among them. After all, I'm a physician and I understand such matters, as they

fall within the purview of my profession. Observe that their letters are at variance with one another. Among these letters, there can be only one from the king—if, indeed, there is even one. All their letters touch on three matters: first, the king's description to you of himself; secondly, his declaration to you of the habits that made you ill, his forbidding you from them, and his guiding you to a state that will make you healthy; and thirdly, the medicine that will give you health and ease in a life forever untouched by illness.

"As I said, I'm a physician and I too understand the habits that cause illness and the states that lead to health. Further, I know your father's attributes from your own likeness, for you are his son—even though I've never seen him. Come, let's first examine these messengers' medicines, what the king forbids and commands you in his letters, and his description of himself. If someone has a medicine that does good constantly; if there is in someone's letter a description of the habits that I know lead to illness and these he forbids you, while at the same time he commands you to do what leads to health; if there is in it a description of your father that, on comparison, is found to agree with your likeness—if all this is true, I say, he must be the true messenger of your father. Him we shall accept; all who disagree with him we shall reject."

They collected the medicines, and the physician examined them. All were contrary to one another. All also forbade the king's son from doing what was beneficial, while at the same time commanding him to do what leads to illness—with one exception. There was one letter in which there was a beneficial medicine. It was forbidding him from what would make him sick and commanding him to do what would make him healthy. The same held for the king's description of himself. The physician compared all the descriptions to the youth's attributes. And again, there was only one with a description that resembled him, and it was in the same letter that had given the true description of his illness and of the beneficial medicine. The youth thus took that letter and the medicine, and putting his trust in it, he acted accordingly. He also summoned the one who brought it and declared him the true messenger of the king. The others he declared liars and drove away harshly.

The hidden king is God. May He be blessed and exalted! His son is Adam and his seed, whom God created. The physician is the mind, which God gave to Adam. By it, he is to recognize God. By it, he is to recognize and do what is right, while at the same time recognizing what is wrong and abstaining from it. The son's neglect of the physician and his falling ill is Adam's neglect of the mind, his falling into sin, his going forth from Paradise to the earth, and his causing the mind to incline to the life of this

world, a life like that of the beasts. The king's sending him a messenger represents God's sending, in truth, a messenger and a book to His creation. In this book, He gives them a true description of Himself, according to which He is to be worshipped. In it, He forbids them from every form of evil and insolence and commands them to do good in this world. In it, He proclaims for those who do good their blessedness in the next world, as well as unending comfort, while for evildoers He promises Hell, the fire of which is not extinguished.[28] This is the one true religion.

As for the king's enemies, those who wanted to harm the king through his son, those who prepared messengers and letters and sent them so as to destroy him, these are the devils, who have done the same thing. The messenger of God and His true book have come into the world. Against Him, each of those devils gathered, each declaring the others to be liars and summoning humanity to himself. Among them was the true messenger, and he, till now, was as one of them, unrecognized. These messengers are those I described above, those who met me one after another when I descended from the mountain, each inviting me to join him—namely, the Hanifs, Magians, Samaritans, Jews, Christians, Manicheans, Marcionites, and Bardaisanites. (In the real world, there are yet other religions and still more disagreement. We, however, have restricted ourselves to the aforementioned eight or nine and explained what each proclaims with regard to the attributes of God, the permitted and the forbidden, and reward and punishment.)

We must now act like the wise physician. We must lay the books to one side and inquire of the mind, how, from the likeness of human nature, we might know God's attributes, which our senses do not see and our minds do not comprehend. We must then inquire how this nature can teach us about what is good and what is evil, about what is commendable and what is reprehensible, and finally, how it can teach us about the eternal reward with which God blesses it and about its punishment and eternal wretchedness. When we have discussed and come to understand these subjects, we shall compare those books that are in our possession. If we find a book with these things in it, we shall know that it is from God. That book we shall confess and accept; every other book we shall reject.

Human Nature as an Image of God

While God is unseen, through the likeness of our own nature's virtues, notwithstanding that God transcends and is contrary to our nature, our minds can see both Him and the attributes according to which He is to be worshipped. To illustrate this, consider the following: We cannot see our

own face as it is in reality,[29] but only through its likeness. Take, for instance, the man who looks in a mirror and sees his face from the likeness in it. When he does this, it is clear that he, through its likeness, has seen something unseen along with all its attributes.

In terms of these attributes, the two faces,* in a sense, resemble one another. For instance, suppose two strangers come to us, one knowing the man who looked in the mirror, the other not knowing him. Suppose further that they looked at the face in the mirror. The one who knew the man would recognize that this is the face of his friend. The one who did not know him, when he saw him he would know that his is the face in the mirror. Accordingly, the mind infers from the one to the other and vice versa, from either of the two to that to which it corresponds.† At the same time, in terms of these same attributes, the two faces do not quite resemble one another, for the face of the man as it is in reality in and of itself transcends and is contrary to the likeness in the mirror. After all, he exists, while the image does not. He sees, hears, and smells, while the face in the mirror does not. Accordingly, something unseen can be seen from its likeness, notwithstanding that it transcends and is contrary to its likeness.

In the same way, when with our minds we examine Adam's nature and observe its virtues, we can see God from it and have true knowledge of Him, for that nature is His likeness, notwithstanding that God transcends and is contrary to it. (The situation is analogous to the face of a person as it is in reality and its likeness.) Adam's nature has both virtues and defects. For instance, Adam, in his nature, today exists and tomorrow is gone, is living and dead, learned and ignorant, wise and unwise, powerful and weak. The same holds for his other attributes. They come in pairs. Some are virtues; others, defects. God is not comprehended through the defects of Adam's nature, nor does God resemble Adam in those defects. It is only with regard to his virtues that Adam resembles God. Indeed, one can see God from each one of his virtues and see each one of his virtues in God. After all, Adam's virtues came to him from God. The situation is similar to the likeness in the mirror. In that likeness, there is no attribute that is not also in the person, for everything in the likeness came to it from the face of that person. It is in this manner that we can see God from the virtues of Adam's nature.

When with our minds we examine Adam's nature and see that it exists, we say: If Adam exists, He who caused him to be thus must surely exist. In other words, from the existence of Adam we infer the existence of God. Nonetheless, God's existence is not like Adam's existence, for God's ex-

* That is, the actually existing face and its likeness in a mirror.

† That is, from the likeness to the real entity and from the real entity to the likeness.

istence transcends and is contrary to Adam's existence. After all, Adam's existence has a beginning and an end, while God's existence is above and contrary to that, being without beginning and having no end.

So also, we see that Adam is alive and say: If Adam is alive, we know that God is alive. Nonetheless, God's life is not like Adam's life, but contrary to it. Adam's life is perishing and in order to persist requires, first, milk, and then, food and drink. It grows up little by little, such that he is now a child, now a youth, now an old man. This is followed by decrepitude, death, and destruction. The same holds with regard to whatever else touches the life of human beings. As for God's life, it transcends and is contrary to this. It has no beginning and needs nothing. It does not grow up and change from one state to another. It does not fall into decrepitude, death, or destruction.

So also, we see that Adam has knowledge and say: If Adam has knowledge, He who caused him to be thus must surely have knowledge. From Adam's having knowledge, we know that God has knowledge. Nonetheless, God's knowledge is not like Adam's knowledge but transcends and is contrary to it. Adam obtained his knowledge through his senses or from someone who taught him. He does not know what was and will be, nor even much that is right in front of him. As for God's knowledge, it transcends and is contrary to this. He did not obtain it through His senses or from someone who taught Him. From Him, nothing that was or will be is hidden, from all eternity to all eternity.

In a similar manner, when we see Adam's wisdom, his seeing and his hearing, his strength, his abundance of goodness and generosity, his righteousness, his patience and his mercy, his forbearance and his forgiveness, his justice, and all of his other virtues, we say: If Adam has these virtues, He who caused him to be such surely has wisdom, strength, seeing and hearing, magnanimity and generosity, righteousness, patience and mercy, forbearance, and justice. Because Adam is thus we know that God is thus. Nonetheless, in these attributes, too, God transcends and is contrary to Adam. It is as we explained above regarding existence, life, and knowledge. Accordingly, it is in the virtues of his nature that Adam resembles God, and it is from these that our minds see God and His attributes. In that we see them in Adam, we know that they are in God, notwithstanding that God's attributes transcend and are contrary to them, as we explained.

An Argument for the Trinity

In a similar manner, Adam has yet other, more noble virtues that are also in God. Adam resembles God with regard to these in the same way that he resembles Him with regard to the virtues we mentioned above, when we

said that we with our minds can see God from them. I am speaking of begetting and headship. We see that something resembling Adam in nature was begotten and proceeded from him.* We see, too, that he is head over this one who is like him. Since Adam begets and is head over one who is from him, He who caused him to beget and to be head must surely Himself beget and be head over One who resembles Him. Nonetheless, this is so in a transcendent and contrary manner. Adam's begetting of a son took place through a woman, sex, and development. So too, Eve proceeded from him "as bone of his bone,"[30] through a decrease of his body. Further, Adam preceded both his son and Eve in time. Moreover, though he is head over them and they share a common nature, their wills do not wholly agree with his.

God's begetting of His Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit, however, transcend and are contrary to this. They did not take place through a woman or sex. They involved neither pregnancy nor development. There was no question of temporal precedence, only simultaneity. So too, God's headship over Those who are from Him involves no disagreement. Rather, Those Two agree with Him in nature, will, eternity, and desire. Among Them, there is absolutely no disagreement, excepting that One begot, Another was begotten, and Another proceeded, while the One who begot is head.

Suppose someone denies that Adam and God resemble one another with regard to begetting and headship in the same way that they resemble one another with regard to the other virtues. We answer: You ought not deny this. There are in Adam no virtues more noble or exalted than begetting and headship. After all, if Adam did not beget, he would have neither felicity of life, nor headship, nor speech, nor generosity, nor any of the other virtues attributed to him. His felicity of life would be with the pigs, asses, and other beasts—which is not felicity.† So too, there could be no headship if it were only over such as these, for it would not be headship but degradation and dishonor to be called the head of ticks, pigs, scarabs, and worms. His speech, too, would be empty and unneeded, for he would have no one to understand or answer him. In the same way, none of his virtues would be counted virtues if he had no one who resembles him. Grant that all of Adam's virtues that are incomparably less [exalted] than begetting are in God. Grant further that Adam resembles God with regard to these lesser virtues and that they are not to be denied of God. If you grant this, then begetting, which is better than these other virtues, is most surely in God and not to be denied of Him. If this were not so, then Adam would be better than God in

* As will be clear from what follows, Theodore is referring to Adam's offspring and to Adam's wife, Eve, respectively.

† Because, it seems, Adam would have no equal with whom to share it.

that he has two virtues—the best of virtues—that are not in God, namely, begetting and headship. No sane mind can accept, however, that Adam has virtues that are not in God, as this is something absurd.

Again, would it not be absurd if Adam were head of one like himself but God were head only of His creation? Adam would not be pleased to be head of the creation. Indeed, neither he nor any of us would be pleased to be head of pigs, asses, flies, bedbugs, fleas, scarabs, and worms. If Adam and we are not pleased with this, how is it that we attribute to God that with which we ourselves are not pleased? If we were to say that God is head, but only over angels and humans, this also would be degradation. After all, by nature, angels and humans stand further from God than do pigs, lice, and scarabs from us. While we and those animals share the nature of living being, angels and humans share absolutely nothing with God. The distance between them and God is incomparably greater than the distance between heaven and earth. Accordingly, if someone were to attribute headship to God but suggests that His headship is only over creatures, he has attributed to Him ignominy and degradation, as well as that with which he himself would not be pleased to be described. If, on the other hand, there is attributed to Adam or one of us headship over another human being, one from him or like him, we do not consider that degradation but glory, exaltation, and honor.

If all this is so, then God—may He be blessed and exalted!—is surely head, not over His creatures, but over One like Him. And if He is head over One like Him, He, too, has begotten a Son and there has proceeded from Him a Spirit, and He and Adam resemble one another with regard to begetting and headship. Thus, among the many things the mind can infer from the likeness of Adam's nature is that God is three persons: One who begets, Another who is begotten, and Another who proceeds. In this manner, confirmation is given to the words of the speaker, who did not lie in what he spoke, when he said, "And God created humans, and in the image of God He created them."[31] This, too, is among God's attributes.

An Argument on Ethics

Even as our minds can infer God's unseen attributes from the likeness of our nature, so also they can infer from our nature knowledge of the permitted and the forbidden, the commendable and the reprehensible, good and evil, what makes us righteous and what makes us corrupt, as well as what enables us to do these things. Instinctively, we all dislike and recognize ugly and corrupt deeds when they are committed by our neighbor. For instance, suppose that someone deceives us or demeans us, mocks us, misleads us,

rejects or reviles us, strikes us, takes something of ours, treats us ill, commits a loathsome act with our womenfolk, coerces us in something that is our own business, or anything else like this. If this happens, we instinctively dislike it, recognizing that it is something corrupt, reprehensible, evil, and forbidden. Accordingly, we can define what is corrupt, reprehensible, evil, and forbidden as follows: Do not do to your neighbor something harmful that you would dislike him to do to you.[32] As for what enables you to do this, it is that you not covet what your neighbor possesses.[33]

Instinctively, we all like and recognize deeds that are good, proper, righteous, and permitted. For instance, we like it when our neighbor treats us with respect and generosity, meets our needs, is kind to us even though we treat him with insolence, forgives us even though we do him evil, and lavishes us with advice, which is the pinnacle of all good. Accordingly, we can define what is good, righteous, and permitted as follows: Do to your neighbor excellent and commendable deeds that you would like him to do to you. As for what enables you to do this, it is that you rid yourself of desire for this world and for everything that you or anyone else possesses. In sum, our nature has taught us that what is evil and forbidden is that you do to your neighbor something reprehensible that you would dislike him to do to you, as well as what enables you to do this. It has also taught us that what is good and permitted is that you do to your neighbor the good deed that you would like him to do to you, as well as what enables you to do this.

The objective of all that we have said above is love. Love can be defined as preferring others to one's self. Take, for instance, the love of a king for an only-begotten son born to him in his old age. He wishes him to inherit his kingdom. He is, after all, the apple of his eye and the very essence of his own self. He is unable to harm or make him sad in any way. Rather, for him he would sacrifice himself, his kingdom, and what he possesses. It is the same with those who are perfectly virtuous—except that their love is directed toward all people. If we behave in this manner we are in the likeness of God. This is because God—may He be blessed!—desires nothing in the world for Himself, nor does He ever desire harm or sadness for any of his servants. Rather, He bears with those who do Him evil and is kind to those who forge lies against Him, a fount of goodness for the undeserving. Everything that is in the world He gives to human beings. With His angels, heaven and earth, and the intermediate elements, He helps them to live their lives—out of His kindness and generosity. He does not prefer the righteous to the unrighteous or the good to the wicked, but His good flows equally to both. Accordingly, the objective of the perfectly virtuous is God Himself, who forbids them from evil and wickedness and commands them to do

good and to become in their relations with others perfectly good, as is God Himself. This, then, is among the things our nature teaches us about what is forbidden and permitted in this world.

An Argument on Reward and Punishment

Our nature can also teach us about reward and punishment in the next world. Our minds recognize what constitutes our nature's happiness and misery in this world. From these, we can infer what constitutes its happiness and misery in the next world. For this reason, before we describe the latter, we must treat the former, only then making our inferences about the latter.

In this world, the life of created beings has no permanence without external things to assist and uphold it. For instance, the life of human beings does not last and has no permanence apart from the external assistance of food and drink, air to breathe, and the like. There is nothing that lives in and of itself, with no need for other things to sustain its life: excepting God, every living being has permanence of life from other things, in the manner we have explained. For in every living creature, God has established a desire for what sustains and gives permanence to its life, a movement toward it, and an eagerness to seek it. God has also prepared objects from which it might obtain this. When a living creature obtains these, its life is happy; when it does not obtain them, its life is miserable. Take, for example, that by which the life of our own nature is sustained and for which our own desires strive: eating food, drinking water, breathing air, wearing clothes to ward off cold and heat, and dwelling in houses, in which we take shelter from sun and rain, snow and ice. (There are other, similar things that the nature of our life requires.)

As for the objects toward which our desires are moved so as to obtain such necessities, these include earth for growing food, springs for water to drink, air to breathe, sheep for wool, earth for cotton, flax for clothing, as well as ropes, thickets, rocks, and wood for building houses, and so on. Such are the objects from which we obtain sustenance. When from these our desires obtain sustenance for our life, we are happy; when they do not, we are miserable. It is like a man who travels in the desert, who is overcome by heat and scorching winds and grows thirsty, who searches for water but finds none, so that his innards burn and his tongue is parched, who is miserable in the worst way possible. If he is provided with cold water and partakes of it, however, his innards grow cool and his tongue is moistened, he takes pleasure in it and is refreshed by it and is happy in the greatest way possible. The same holds with regard to hunger and the other needs of our

nature. Accordingly, the worldly happiness of humans consists in there being and in obtaining the objects that God has prepared for the sustenance of their lives and for which God has implanted in them desires. Misery, on the other hand, is being deprived of these and lacking them.

Our minds recognize that there are desires that God has implanted in our nature. Out of need for these, our nature is moved. By these, our life is sustained. For these, God has prepared objects, from which it obtains sustenance. If our nature obtains these, it enjoys happiness; if it does not, it is miserable. In the same manner, our minds also recognize that there are yet other desires implanted in our nature. These are not of this world. They represent, rather, perfect happiness and consummate longing. Corresponding to these, God has prepared objects, through which, for those who obtain them, there is happiness. In short, when our nature obtains these, it enjoys happiness; when it does not, it is miserable.

Each of us desires to live forever and not die. Each of us desires a body that cannot be touched by infirmity, injury, change, or corruption: if thrown into fire, that it not be burnt; if into water, that it not be drowned; if a boulder falls on it, that it not be crushed; if struck by a sword, that it not be wounded; if bitten by a snake, that it not be harmed. The same holds for the other misfortunes and infirmities that bring about harm in this world. Each of us desires, on looking at some city or land, to see both it and what it contains, that there come between our sight and what it desires neither distance, nor mountain, nor wall, nor house, nor veil, that no aspect of that city or land be hidden from our sight. Each of us desires to have perfect knowledge, that is, a complete knowledge of good and evil, the permitted and the forbidden, and so on, correctly and without error. Each of us desires to be able to repulse all evil and not flag in the performance of what is good, just, and righteous. Each of us desires unceasing wealth, that we might distribute it to all. Each of us desires to be merciful and gentle, pure, good, and just, and—the summit of every virtue—to love all and be loved by all. Each of us desires to live in unceasing and unmeasured happiness. The same holds for what is like these desires.

The object of such desires is God, in and of Himself.* May He be blessed and exalted! He is living and does not die. He does not change and is not subject to corruption. No infirmity befalls Him. He sees all and from Him nothing that was or will be is hidden. He has perfect knowledge, of good and evil, of the permitted and the forbidden. He is able to repulse evil and do good perfectly. He possesses unceasing wealth, which He gives to all. He is kind and merciful, good, pure, and just. He loves all and is loved by

* That is, when we desire all these qualities, we, effectively, desire to be like God.

all. His life is characterized by unceasing happiness.

Now that we recognize these exalted desires implanted in us, as well as their object, we must know the following: God implanted in us worldly desires and prepared objects corresponding to them, that we might obtain them and enjoy happiness. God did not deprive us of these objects, lest we be miserable. That would not befit Him. Rather, He generously granted them to us, for the happiness and sustenance of our life, as befits Him. In precisely the same manner, since He implanted in us desires and He is their object—may He be blessed and exalted!—we know that He does not keep us from Himself, lest He make us miserable. That would not befit Him. Rather, He generously grants Himself to us, and we dwell with Him and touch Him, partaking of His sweetness and happiness through these desires. It is for these that our souls long. They represent perfect happiness and consummate longing. Through Him, we become gods and enjoy Him forever.

Accordingly, the summit of our nature's happiness is that we become gods and enjoy God. We do not mean to suggest that we shall change from our human nature and become gods by nature. This is impossible. It is not right for the created to become uncreated. Rather, we remain as we were in our human nature, while coming to contain God's nature and through it becoming gods—without change. To illustrate this, consider a piece of iron that is placed in fire, heated, and then removed. It becomes fire but is not changed from its nature. No, it is now iron that contains fire and acts according to fire's nature, for it now burns, gives light, and heats.[*34] So also, our nature contains and encompasses God's nature—without change. May He be blessed! And thereby, when we come into contact with Him, we acquire a life that is eternal and immortal, and untouched by change, or corruption, or infirmity. This life we acquire from the totality of His virtues, through our desire for them—a desire that He himself implanted within us, as we have explained.

The virtues to which I here refer are the virtues of God that we mentioned above, when we compared them with the virtues of Adam's nature and suggested that God transcends and is contrary to Adam in them. We noted that Adam exists but that he is not permanent, but that God, who also exists, transcends and is contrary to Adam's existence, in that He is permanent and does not pass out of existence. This virtue, as well as all of God's other virtues, in which He transcends and is contrary to Adam's nature—it is for these that God implanted desires in us, thinking it good to bestow them on us and bless our natures with them, forever, in the manner we have

* This is a common patristic analogy for becoming like God, or "deification," used, for instance, by John of Damascus.

explained. This is the happiness about which our nature has taught us that it is that than which nothing is greater.

All this is like that thirsty man we mentioned above: when he found the cold water and drank it, through it he enjoyed happiness; when he lacked it, he was miserable. Nonetheless, the happiness of finding God and the happiness of finding water to drink are not equal, nor are the misery of lacking God and the misery of lacking water equal. Rather, the nobility and exaltedness of finding happiness in God over finding happiness in water is comparable to His own nobility and exaltedness over the water; so also, the intensity of the misery of lacking Him is greater than the intensity of the misery of lacking water. This blessing is God's reward for His beloved. This misery is His punishment for those who disobey Him. It is this that our nature teaches us.

Discerning the Religions

Knowing the things explained above, we must now act like the wise physician, by comparing the religions we encountered and examining what each says about God, the permitted and the forbidden, and reward and punishment. If we find one that agrees with what our own nature has taught us, we shall know for certain that it is true, that it is from God, and that through it alone God is to be worshipped. We shall wholeheartedly accept it, take our stand on it, and worship God through it, casting aside, rejecting, and despising the rest.

On examining the matter, we find that the Gospel alone contains what we learned from our own nature. The Gospel alone contains what we learned about God being three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. At the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Christ said to His disciples, "Even as My Father sent Me, I have sent you. Go forth to the Gentiles and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and teach them to do all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you until the end of the age. Amen!"[35] This is exactly what our own nature taught us, as a result of its being in the likeness of God.

As for the other religions, not one gives any such guidance. Rather, they describe their gods according to the imaginings of their human and earthly minds. One says that the Deity is stars. One says that God loves two children, Satan and Hormazd, who married his mother. Others say that He is just a single person. Others say that there are two gods with different natures, one good and one evil, the good one being God, the evil one being Satan. Others say that there are three gods: one just, one good, and Satan, who is wicked. Others say that there are five gods, four without intellects and a fifth with intellect. Others say "One, Eternal, who did not beget and

was not begotten.'"* Thus do they describe God, not one of them hitting on a true account of Him. Their descriptions are from the earth, not from God. The Gospel's description alone is from God. We know this because it offers us what our own nature taught us, as a result of its being in the likeness of God, as we explained above.

So too, the Gospel records that Christ commanded His disciples to do what is permitted and to refrain from what is forbidden, to do what is good, to refrain from what is bad, and to be perfectly good, and this in a manner that accords with what our own nature has taught us about refraining from evil and doing good. To this end, He said, "Behold, what you do not like other people to do to you, do not do it to them, and what you like other people to do to you, do it to them."[36] He also taught how one might acquire the ability to refrain from evil and be perfectly good. This takes place in four different ways: first, abandon and reject the things of the world; secondly, love God and put Him above the world; thirdly, love other people and put them above the world; and fourthly, forgo retaliation, cling to forgiveness, reward evil with good, and imitate God.

This is what Christ said about renunciation: "Sell all you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven. Take up your cross and follow Me."[37] Again, "in the world, do not take bread for two days, nor two sets of clothing nor a bag nor copper in your belt."[38] Concerning the love of God and putting Him above the world, Christ said, "In the world, whoever loves father or mother, wife or child, relative or money, more than Me, is not worthy of Me."[39] Concerning our love for one another, Christ said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. By this people will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."[40] This is the type of love where we prefer the one loved to ourselves: "Even as I have loved you, I sacrificed Myself for you."[41] Concerning forgiveness, rewarding with good, and the imitation of God, He said, "It was said to the ancients, 'An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth.' I say to you, however: Do not requite evil with evil. Rather, if someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the left. If someone takes your clothes, give him your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go two. If someone asks you, give, and if someone asks you for a loan, do not refuse. Do not hate your enemies, but love them. Bless those who curse you and do good to those who drive you away. Pray for those who conquer and oppress you, that you might be the child of your heavenly Father, who makes His sun rise on the good and the bad, on the righteous and the unrighteous."[42]

The Gospel thus commands us to do the same perfect good that our nature teaches—and in this is health. After all, those who please others with

* This is a Qurʾanic quotation (Qurʾan 112:2–3), and the reference is to the Muslims.

what pleases themselves, those who cast aside and renounce love for the world, those who place love for God above the world and their brethren above both it and themselves, those who renounce retaliation, those who forgive, those who requite evil with good, those who love their enemies, those who imitate God, the summit of every good and virtue, and become His children—they are the most exalted of human beings, and it is they who have banished sickness from their nature and caused it to be in perfect health. Of this health, too, our nature has taught us.

With respect to this second subject, we see that not one of the other religions recognized or commanded such things. Indeed, the situation is quite the opposite. They permitted their followers to cling to the world and pandered to their desires for it and to their enjoyment of its sweetness. This was something that is inimical to their nature and makes it ill, barring it from love for the Creator and from love for one another. Like wild animals, they commanded nothing of virtue, but only vengeance and revenge. Indeed, they were not satisfied with vengeance but went even further. They abuse but do not accept abuse, and if abused, they strike, and if struck, they kill. Nor do they limit themselves to this, but they take their swords and go forth to those who have done them no harm, killing and taking them as spoils. All the [other] religions consider this acceptable. I cannot help but wonder how they claim God commands them to do this, even though this is contrary to our nature and causes its corruption! God—may He be blessed and exalted!—does not desire our nature's corruption but its goodness, for He has ordered our nature to keep away from corruption.

As for what would cause our nature to inherit Hell, God would command neither that, nor our nature's corruption, nor something that bars our nature from Himself. Thus, whoever claims that our nature's corruption is from God, that person has erred in suggesting that it has come from God. Whoever makes our nature good and healthy, whoever brings it something that draws it near to God, that person is from God. Accordingly, in that the holy Gospel alone brings this, it alone has come from God. Of this there can be no doubt.

We turn now to reward and punishment. In the Gospel, Christ promised the righteous and the unrighteous the same things that our own nature taught us. The righteous will dwell and be one with the Deity in eternal life, the joy of which is unceasing. The unrighteous will be separated from that life, being in Hell forever. On this subject, Christ told His disciples in the Gospel, "Those who love Me will keep My commandments; and the Father will love them, and I and the Father will come to them and make Our dwelling with them."[43] Again, "if you love Me, keep My commandments;

and I shall ask the Father to give you another Comforter, one to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. He was not seen in the world, and no one recognized Him or was able to accept Him; you recognized Him, however, for He dwells with you and is in you."[44]

Accordingly, whoever keeps Christ's commandments becomes the eternal dwelling place of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and, by Them, is loved. In that Christ wished to teach them that this would happen not just on earth but also in heaven, He said, "The Father loves you, for you have loved Me and believed that I came from the Father and have come into the world; and I shall leave the world and return to the Father."[45] Again, "believe in God and believe in Me. How many dwelling places there are in My Father's house! If this were not so, I would not have told you that I go to prepare dwelling places for you."[46] Again, "I shall come again and gather you to Myself, so that where I am you may also be."[47]

Accordingly, from heaven, from the Father, Christ came into the world, and to the Father, to heaven, He returned. For those who believe in Him, He is preparing dwelling places in heaven with the Father, so that where He is they might also be. It is clear that they will dwell both with the Father and in Christ. After all, Christ went to His Father in heaven and left them behind in the world, and He beseeches the Father concerning them, that He might protect them, until the time comes when He will gather them and they will be one both with Him and with the Father.

It is thus that He says, "Father, they have received Me and know with certainty that I come from Your presence, and they have believed that You sent Me. And now, I beseech You for them; I am not beseeching You for the people of the world but for those whom You have given Me, those who belong to You. All that is Mine is Yours, all that is Yours is Mine, and in them I am glorified. I am no longer in the world; they are still in the world, but I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them through Your name, the name You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are one. While I was with them in the world, I protected them through Your name. Those that You gave Me, I protected them; not one of them was destroyed, except for the son of perdition. Father, it is not for these alone that I beseech You, but for those who through their words will believe in Me, that they may be one. As You, Father, are in Me, and I am in You, so also may they be one in Us, as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that We might all be perfectly one, and so that the world might know that You sent Me and that I loved them even as You loved Me. Father, My desire is that they may be with Me where I am, so that they may look on My glory, which You have given Me because You loved me before You formed the world."[48] Accordingly, Christ came from the Father to

the world and to Him returned, and He is in His Father and His Father is in Him, and He is in them and His Father, too, is in them. Again, He made them as He is, that is, as He said, "in His Father" and "one with Him."

Accordingly, as indicated by Christ's words in the Gospel, the dwelling place of the righteous is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in heaven, while the dwelling place of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is also the righteous, and they are one with Him in heaven. If the dwelling place of God is the righteous and the dwelling place of the righteous is God, and they are one with Him, they are in eternal life, without death, without perishing, and they are like Him. As the Gospel also says, "God loves His Son and has entrusted Him with everything. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever disobeys the Son will not see life; God's wrath remains on him."[49] Again, John the evangelist said, "Until now, we did not know for what we were created. From now, we know that we shall see God as He is and shall become like Him."[50] Accordingly, just as our own nature taught us that it desires God, yearns to see Him and to dwell in Him, and to become, like Him, a god, enjoying His eternal life and His unceasing blessing, so too the Gospel has taught and promised.

For the following reason, too, we recognize that the Gospel is truly from God: He created us for one reason, that He might bless both us and His holy angels with Himself and not that He might bless us with food, drink, and sexual relations with women—a blessing that He gave to asses, pigs, and other animals. As the holy Gospel says, Christ answered those who asked Him about marriage in the next world, "You have erred in your reading of the scriptures and have not understood the power of God. It is only in this world that men marry women and women belong to men. As for the next world, men will not marry women nor will women take men. Instead, like angels of God, they will arise together and become the children of God, having become children of the resurrection and gods with Him in eternal life"[51]—not gods in nature, but through the communion of life, according to the example we gave above: the piece of iron that becomes fire without destroying its nature or changing from it. This is something that does not occur to any of the other religions. It simply does not enter their heads. All they can think about is the earth, food and drink, carnal relations and the pleasures of the body. They know nothing else. Like beasts, it is for this alone that their souls yearn and it is of this alone that they think.

The Gospel is thus the true religion of God, through which alone He is to be worshipped. This we learn from the three things our nature taught: first, that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; secondly, concerning the permitted and the forbidden, that we are to please others as we please ourselves, forsaking evil and doing good, standing firm in righteous love and imitation

of God; and thirdly, concerning reward and punishment, that the righteous will see God, dwell in Him, share with Him in His blessed life, and become, like Him, gods forever—though without changing their natures—while the unrighteous who do not believe in Christ will be separated from Him and in their separation experience eternal misery. Because of this, we believe this religion, accept it, and cling to it. For its sake, we endure tribulations in this world, through the promised hope. For it, we die, hoping through it to meet the face of God. So too, we cast aside all other religions, push them away and drive them off, counting them as nothing.

What about Judaism?

Suppose someone objects: The only religion you accept is the Gospel's. You do this because of what you have said about how perfectly it describes God, the permitted and the forbidden, reward and punishment—something you claim your own nature teaches you. You also believe that no other religion is from God, declaring Him too exalted to have sent [as messengers] the human beings whom the other religions describe, because of their sins and defects. If all this is so, then you have denied that the prophet Moses was sent by God and have declared what he brought to be sin and defect, for he did not bring what the Gospel brought. Rather, what he brought is contrary to the Gospel and quite defective. Thus, it must be that you think Moses not to have been sent by God.

To this we respond: In this book, we have sought to confirm our religion by reason, not by scripture. With regard to reason, we do not think that it should be accepted that Moses was from God. The same holds for what the other [Old Testament] prophets brought. This is because of the defects in what they brought and because it is contrary to what our nature teaches. With regard to reason, the only religion we accept as divine is the Gospel, because its message is so perfect and correct, as we have explained.

From another perspective, however, we accept that Moses and the [Old Testament] prophets, but no others,* are from God, and this, for two reasons. First, we know that the Gospel is from God. We accept and believe everything in it. The Gospel tells us that Moses and the prophets—those mentioned in the Old Testament—were sent by God. We thus believe in Moses and accept those prophets. Secondly, we inquired of the Gospel why God sent Moses with this defective religion. In describing the Deity, why did he proclaim the Father alone and summon to Him alone? Why did he not bring a perfect understanding of the permitted and the forbidden? Why

* Though he is careful not to make it too explicit, here Theodore Abu Qurra implicitly rejects the Muslim belief in the prophethood of Muhammad.

did he permit so many things? Why did he make no mention of the perfect reward for which we were created, or of punishment?

When we inquired of the Gospel about this, it told us that this was because of the people's weakness. As for his description of the Deity, this was because the people were worshipping innumerable devils and idols. Moses thus commanded them, "Get rid of your innumerable multitude of gods and worship God alone." It was his hope that when they had abandoned their gods and come to worship God, God would reveal to them His Son and Spirit, at a time when it was necessary that they worship Him perfectly. It was for this reason that He at that time revealed to them the Father alone. Something similar holds with regard to the permitted and the forbidden. The people were addicted to the ways of the Gentiles—murder, robbery, adultery, theft, false testimony, and so on. They were completely unable to stop doing evil and incline toward good. Because of this, He gave them a law that dealt with the stopping of evil but still permitted them many things. As for doing good, He left this aside until the proper time should come. With regard to reward and punishment, the people were not immediately able to withdraw from the blessings of this world and patiently hope that they would receive a reward from God after death. Their hearts were immersed in worldly desires. These alone they knew. They sought only immediate gratification. Knowing that through it He would draw them to Himself, God thus gave them the land of Palestine, something for which they were hoping.

This is what the Gospel teaches us, and we believe in all that it teaches us about Moses, namely, that he was sent by God and that these subjects are defective for the aforementioned reasons. It is thus that we believe that Moses and his message are from God. If not for the Gospel, however, we would not believe that Moses is from God. Indeed, on the basis of reason, we would reject him most earnestly. So also, we believe that the [Old Testament] prophets are from God on account of the Gospel, not on account of reason. Since Christ told us that they were prophets, we believe them. At the same time, since we know all the acts of Christ, have read about them in their books, and have found that they precisely described beforehand all His acts, we also believe that they are prophets. In short, we do not believe in Christ and His mission through the books of the prophets. Rather, we believe that they are prophets, first, because Christ called them prophets, and secondly, because we see His deeds described in their books.

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Chapter 3

The Disputation of the Monk Abraham of Tiberias

مجادلة الراهب إبراهيم الطبراني

Krisztina Szilágyi

The author of the *Disputation of the Monk Abraham of Tiberias* opens his story, set in Jerusalem, with the emir ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Hashimi marveling at the Christians: How can they be so learned, yet favor their ludicrous doctrines over Islam? To receive answers, he summons a few illustrious Christians. The invitees, however, dodge his questions: they fear speaking truth to power. Irritated, ʿAbd al-Rahman summons a monk he spots on the street. The monk, who introduces himself as Abraham from Tiberias, at first also declines to speak his mind but eventually accepts the emir's assurances of safety and the next day returns with a booklet responding to the emir's claims for the superiority of Islam. When the monk finishes reading the booklet aloud, the emir is infuriated and summons a local Muslim debater to refute the monk's arguments as publicly as he made them. Over the next few days, the emir entrusts two other Muslims with the task. The three debates, which make up most of the text, focus on Christological issues: the Muslims ask knotty questions about the Incarnation and the divinity of Christ, and the monk gives astute and thorough answers. To the emir's dismay, the monk bests all three interlocutors. As a last resort the emir puts him to three thaumaturgic tests. The monk, however, passes those too: after he makes the sign of the cross, neither fire nor poison harms him, and demons obey him. To crown his success, several members of the audience, Jews and former Christians who had become Muslims, convert to Christianity; the latter are promptly put to death for apostasy. But all is well that ends well for the protagonist: although for appearance's sake the emir first throws him into prison, under the veil of night he lets him go.

In the *Disputation* the Christian worldview appears as intact as ever, yet the monk seems fully immersed in the culture of his Muslim Arab interlocu-

tors. Not only does the author have him quote the Qurʾan, but he also makes him speak beautiful Arabic, sometimes in rhyming prose; cite *hadith*s (authoritative narratives or sayings attributed to Muhammad or early Muslims) and belles lettres; and refer to Muslim rituals and theology, Islamic history, and popular legends about pre-Islamic Arabia. Among Christian texts he quotes the Bible, especially Genesis, the Psalms, and the Gospels, and once he alludes to a late antique Biblical legend. The author effortlessly shifts from one religious vocabulary to the other. For example, when the monk speaks about baptism to a Muslim interlocutor, he calls it *sibgha*, as the Qurʾan does, but when the new converts to Christianity ask for baptism they call it *maʿmudiyya*, with the word more commonly used by Christian Arabs.[1]

Who was the author of the *Disputation*, and when and where did he write it? There is no precise answer to any of these questions. The text was transmitted anonymously. The claim of one scholar that Abraham of Tiberias himself put the debate into writing lacks evidence.[2] As we saw above, the author was an Arabic-speaking Christian with good knowledge of Islam and Muslim culture. On top of this, two things can be reasonably inferred about him. First, since the theology of the text reflects Chalcedonian Christology, he must have been an Arab Orthodox Christian.[3] Second, since Palestine features prominently in the *Disputation* and since it was (together with Sinai) the center of early Arab Orthodox literary production, he probably wrote the text there.

The date of composition can also only be approximated. According to the text, the debate took place in the first half of the ninth century: the monk says that the Arabs have ruled for less than two hundred years. This, depending on whether we count two hundred lunar years from the *hijra* (following the Muslim calendar) or two hundred solar years from the conquest of the Middle East by the Arabs (following the Christian calendar), points to the period between 815 and 840 CE.[4] However, this in itself means neither that the text was written at that time nor indeed that the debate ever took place. In other words, the author might have invented the debate, and whether or not he did so, he might have written the *Disputation* well after 840.

It is a single detail that makes one suspect that the *Disputation* is not a full-scale fantasy. The main Muslim character, ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Hashimi, crops up in Muslim chronicles as active in the late eighth and early ninth century. Therefore, his life conveniently overlaps with the claimed date of the debate—which could, of course, be explained by assuming an in-depth familiarity with Muslim history on the author's part. More important for our purposes, ʿAbd al-Rahman earned no lasting fame.[5] Had the author made up the debate, he surely would have chosen a more illustrious Muslim to

preside over it. This is indeed what some later copyists did when they transformed the emir into the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 685–705) and the otherwise unknown monk Abraham into the celebrated Arab Orthodox bishop, Theodore Abu Qurra (d. after 816),* thus turning a provincial affair into a royal one and presenting us with a discussion between a seventh-century Muslim and a ninth-century Christian.[6]

Although the text is in all likelihood based on a historical debate, it is a heavily fictionalized account. True, Muslim officials, emirs, viziers, caliphs did organize religious debates with non-Muslims from time to time, and one can hardly doubt that sometimes the non-Muslim debater held the floor. Yet no medieval writer taking his craft seriously would have recounted mere facts. Events had messages and getting these messages across took priority over factuality. The *Disputation* was no exception: it is hard to believe, for example, that none of the three Muslim interlocutors was ever sharp enough to intervene with more than a few words, that the Christian author overheard a conversation between two Muslim debaters in a mosque, or that a demon departed from the possessed resembling smoke. The most plausible scenario seems to be that the historical debate in Jerusalem ended with the Christian debater's success and jubilant local Christians spread the news as well as the inevitable tale woven around it. The author perhaps lived in the region, heard the embellished account, was inspired by it to write the *Disputation*, and for this purpose adjusted it to time-honored topoi of Christian holy men defending their religion.

The *Disputation* circulated in all Arabic-speaking Christian communities, and judging from the number of known manuscripts of it, it ranks among the most popular Arab Christian writings. The transmission of fierce polemic like this surely had its dangers, but through its narrative, the victory of the quick wit of the poor and simple over the mighty and wealthy, of the truthful hermit over the duplicitous antagonist of his religion, Christians could clandestinely reject the hegemony of Islam that was increasingly permeating all facets of everyday life.

The text was so successful that a redactor created a more elaborate version (the so-called *beta* recension) from the older, shorter, and simpler original (*alpha* recension) by inserting additional arguments into it.[7] One of the manuscripts of the *beta* recension is the oldest known copy of the *Disputation*, which its discoverer dated to the tenth century.[8] This makes it likely that the *Disputation* itself was written quite early: since the *beta* recension was produced in or before the tenth century (we do not know how many times it was copied before it was put down in the oldest known manuscript), the *alpha* recension, on which it was based, had also to be written in the tenth century at the very latest and perhaps not long after 840.

* On Theodore Abu Qurra, see chapter 2 in this volume.

Below I offer the first English translation of roughly half of the *alpha* recension.[9] I have attempted to preserve the arc of the story and to give a fair sample of its arguments, but much is left out for reasons of space.[10]

Translation

It is said that one day ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Salih al-Hashimi was struck by the status of the Christians, by their great number, their scholarship, their philosophical and medical knowledge, their erudition, and their steadfastness in the face of humiliation. He was also struck by how excessively they stray from the truth and persist in unbelief, for they maintain that God is three hypostases and that Christ is the Son of God. He thought long and hard about this and similar matters. Finally he called his tutor and told him what came to his mind and what occupied his thoughts.

The tutor said to him, "Do not be surprised by these thoughts. But here we are, Muslims, Christians, and Jews: if you wish to gain a good grasp of this matter, let us assemble some of their scholars and look into your question."

The emir said to him, "But why summon the Jews? God has humiliated them, cursed them, and invalidated their religion!"*

The tutor said to him, "Well, it is as you say and even worse, but we should assemble some of their scholars, who are learned and knowledgeable. This way, if the Christians exaggerate their claims, the Jews will pounce on their lie, for they are enemies of each other."

So he summoned the patriarch of the Christians and lord Elijah, bishop of the Nestorians,†[11] and said to them, "Something came to my mind regarding your religion and I wish to gain a good grasp of your claim that God is three hypostases and that Christ is the Son of God."

They said, "If this is what you seek, you will understand it only with the help of those who study the Scriptures."

So the emir summoned three men, who were in his service, two of them former Christians and the third a former Jew[12] who had converted to Islam at his hands. He also summoned two Jews who studied the Scriptures and his physician. He began asking them about this matter, but they equivocated in their answers, for they did not understand his intention. When the emir realized this, he raised his eyes from the gathering to the road and saw a monk.

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* For other examples of anti-Jewish sentiments, quite common in Arab Christian literature, see chapters 2 and 5 in this volume.

† The author probably avoids naming "the patriarch of the Christians" (i.e., the Chalcedonian patriarch), because in the ensuing story he does not come across as a worthy representative of his community. By contrast, "lord Elijah, bishop of the Nestorians" (i.e., the head of a rival church) is gleefully named.

The emir said to him, "Where do you come from, monk?"

The monk said, "From Tiberias in Syria."

The emir summoned him.

When the monk entered his presence, he greeted him. The emir asked those in attendance, "Do you think he has any knowledge of the matter that occupies us?"

They said to him, "Find out what he knows—if he knows anything at all. If not, let him go on his way."

The emir looked at the monk and said, "Who are you and where are you from? From whom are you descended and to whom are you attached? How do you live, what do you believe, and where are you headed?"[13]

The monk answered him, saying, "I am a slave of God, from the offspring of Adam, from the people of Qahtan,*[14] from Tiberias in Syria. My refuge is monks' cells,[15] the quarry of learning and knowledge, but I am dimwitted.[16] I came here beseeching God as a pilgrim to the Holy City[17] and I hope for His forgiveness and reward. And here I am in a lofty palace, in a gathering entirely spotless, in the presence of a king as illustrious as the moon is luminous. May God give long life to the good emir, grant him felicity, and protect him from iniquity!"

The emir said, "Bravo, bravo!† Monk, you must explain the matter of your religion to me, so that doubt may quit our hearts."

The monk answered, saying, "That would not redound to my praise, for men of intelligence would not excuse my ignorance."[18]

The emir said to him, "So, which religion is the preferable and the best, and which community does God hold dearest?"

The monk said, "May I be your ransom!‡[19] There are words for every occasion and there is a response to every speech.[20] But this is an occasion where the like of me cannot speak and my speech cannot receive a response, for in the presence of the emir I see two leaders of the Christians accompanied by a group of people, who surely know the answer to what you asked. Be content with them."

The emir said to him, "No! I grant you words on this occasion and give

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* Arab genealogists regarded Qahtan as the forefather of southern Arabs (in contrast to ʿAdnan, forefather of northern Arabs, to whom Muhammad and his tribe belonged). The monk identifies himself as an Arab here but as belonging to a different branch from the emir's.

† The emir is impressed by the monk's improvisation of rhymed prose. The monk will speak in rhymed prose in several other passages.

‡ This is a stock phrase in medieval Arabic literature. The ransom meant is for prisoners of war—the monk, as it were, offers himself up for the liberty of the emir, should he ever be taken captive. Less literally the phrase could be translated as "I pledge you my life" or "my life is in your hands." When used from inferior to superior, as in the *Disputation*, it is an attempt to ward off punishment.

you permission to speak. I order you to respond! I guarantee your safety. Be assured that today I am inclined to benevolence, munificence, and indulgence. I am seeking clarification."

The monk said, "May God honor you! You have mentioned only a fraction of the glory and nobility known of all who are the Family of the Prophet.*[21] Indeed, God has made you the bedrock of Islam, the light of its darkness, the moon of its might, the sword of its power, the ornament of its glory, the splendor of its eminence, the banner of its strength, the safe-conduct of its flock, the garden of its fruit, the pillar of its commandments, the mainstay of its practices, the Family of excellence—and He has the power to perfect and preserve it.

"You asked about religion: the religion favored by God is the one He chose for His glory, with which He brought joy to His angels, which He prefers for His slaves, with which He has singled out His saints and those who obey Him, the glad tidings of which His prophets have announced, which His messengers approved, which His holy men have stored in His purified treasure chests, to which He led peoples and nations without sword or force or deception, the commandments of which He cleansed of impurity, which He adorned with every good quality, and which He made a sign and a safe-conduct and guidance and light for His slaves in all lands. And the favored community is the one faithful in fasting, constant in prayer, generous in almsgiving, steadfast in reciting the verses of truth day and night, unstinting in devoting their lives and possessions, despite suffering severe humiliation and the shedding of their blood in various kinds of torture, out of loyalty to their Lord and love of Him."

The emir said then, "But if you know so well that this is the true religion why do you follow another?"†

The monk said, "No, by my life, I do not follow another! On the contrary, I hold fast to it, I observe it and follow it, because in it I was planted and grew, in it I blossomed and passed the days of my life, in it I will return to the earth,[22] and in it[23] I will be resurrected to face my Creator."

The emir said to him, "Which religion and which community did you mean then?"

The monk said, "I meant the religion of Christ and the community of the Christians."

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* According to the ʿAbbasids, who ruled in the ninth century, not only Muhammad's direct descendants belonged to the Family of the Prophet but also al-ʿAbbas, the Prophet's uncle, and his descendants, including the emir ʿAbd al-Rahman of the *Disputation*.

† In the previous two paragraphs the monk described Christianity with phrases Muslim authors habitually applied to Islam. Therefore, the emir was convinced that he meant Islam.

The emir said to him, "Nonsense! You impute polytheism to Christ, but Christ 'was not a Jew or a Christian, but a Muslim *hanif*. He was not among the polytheists.'*[24] You say you belong to him, but you are far removed from him and he has nothing to do with you, for you worship him instead of God, although he is a created son of a created woman,[25] God's prophet and submissive slave, whom God aided with His word and His spirit,[26] as a sign to the people and out of mercy to them."[27]

The monk said, "The response to what you said, emir, about Christ and us is as ready as fire is to burn the *ghada* tree.†[28] It requires a refined and subtle intellect and a judgment as prudent as correct, which professes belief in the Standing on the Day of Resurrection.‡ If you desire it to be clarified, you must devote yourself fully to it."

The emir said to him, "We had indeed done so when we inquired about this matter. But your description was wrong. This description does not apply to you and your religion, but to Islam, the religion of truth, which holds,[29] 'Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and in the hereafter he will be among the losers.'[30] The description applies to Muhammad, the seal of the prophets,[31] the lord of the messengers, and to the community shown mercy, which loves its Prophet and his Family, which is pious and free from all blemish. You may know about the Commander of the Faithful§[32] that God made him powerful, assisted him in every way and rendered him safe day and night. He bequeathed to him the Qurʾan, which He sent down as light and guidance,[33] and explained it to the Companions of the Messenger of God, who did not believe in a lie and who bore witness that 'God, there is no god but He'[34] and that Muhammad is His slave and His messenger. So what do you say, monk?"

The monk said, "May God take delight in you! If it is your wish I will say, 'The emir has spoken the truth.' But they say that if one goes to the judge with tearful eyes and a broken heart, crying and imploring him for help, the judge and those present will pity him and decide in his favor, in favor of the impossible, without verification. When both litigants go together, however, the one whose claim is false will be disgraced and his weeping will change to harm against him. In the same way, a speech is worth nothing without a response to it."¶ [. . .]

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* *Hanif* in the Muslim tradition carries positive meaning: it refers to pre-Islamic monotheists who were neither Christian nor Jewish.

† A large shrub, commonly used as firewood (*Haloxylon persicum*).

‡ The "Standing" (before God) is to happen to all humankind on the Day of Resurrection according to Muslim eschatology.

§ "Commander of the Faithful" is a Muslim term for the caliph.

¶ This is a thinly veiled request for permission to openly answer the emir's claims; the monk here argues that truth can be found only when both rival parties are allowed to speak.

The emir said, "How beautiful are your words, monk, and how ignorant your deeds! When you talk, you talk sense, but you are ignorant when it comes to the knowledge of God. Leave this joking and boyish banter. Fear God, to whom you will return,[35] and convert to Islam at my hands, so that I can elevate you to the highest ranks."

So he spoke, but the monk remained silent and did not respond to him. The emir said to him, "Why do I see you speechless? Are you incapable of speaking and responding? What is the matter with you?"

The monk said, "I am not incapable of speaking, for my pasture lands are spacious, the grass plenteous, my paths are easy, my horse swift, unafraid of stumbling or injury. When it comes to the knowledge of God, I am in a meadow, in a state of guidance and in abundant light, not sparse. The words of the emir, however, take me by surprise: they accuse me of ignorance and make our conversation joking and boyish banter. But how could it be otherwise when I am in the presence of a dangerous lion much feared by the calves! Do you not know, emir, that when the lion appears in the pasture lands in the midst of the cattle they scatter and lose their way?"

The emir said, "You have spoken the truth, monk, about the lion and the cattle. It is clearly so. But we have seen a lion that did not overwhelm its prey and did nothing reprehensible to it, out of fear of God or shyness from people. Now understand, monk, and rest assured that this lion, whose flank you avoid and whose pounce you fear, has in forbearance allowed these cattle you mention free rein over the pasture lands and has cleared their way in fairness and justice. Fear God and do not be like those whose ears and eyes God has sealed so that they do not assent and do not believe."[36]

The monk said, "Emir, those whose hearts and eyes God has sealed are the Jews and also the Bedouin, who, your Scripture attests, have no faith.[37] I belong to neither one nor the other but to the slaves of Christ and His followers. May God make the emir distinguished in faith[38] and repay him with good for good and with forgiveness for evil. You showed nobility and benevolence, emir, when you judged as fit for me what you judged as fit for yourself and did not envy me what you consider the happiness of the hereafter. It is indeed right for those who profess a religion and summon others to it not to envy them the benevolence of their Lord. But no, emir, by God, I have neither need nor desire for what you have summoned me to:* I see no bliss in it for me. Were anger not so reprehensible, I would venture to say that God teaches the opposite of each and every thing you claim. Let me go on my way now, may I be your ransom."

The emir said, "What a strange man you are, monk! You shoot poisoned arrows at me and then say to me, 'Let me go.' You have declared that God, who

* That is, conversion to Islam.

sent Muhammad with the truth, was lying. You will not leave until you convert to Islam, willingly or unwillingly, or respond to my question about your doctrine of Christ and about your entire description of my religion and praise for your religion, topic by topic, letter by letter. Abandon hope for anything else."

The monk said, "May I be your ransom, every sinner can repent! I have clearly been guilty of a lapse, so if the emir thinks it right to allow me to repent, let him do so. You asked about three matters. There is no shame or fear in revealing two of them to king or nobleman, and their concealment is in fact not permitted: these are the matter of religion and of Christ. But when it comes to conversion to Islam, by God, I will never renounce Christ even if you chop me up limb by limb. Ask me whatever you wish about the hypostases and Christ, and I will bring you light about them[39] that will outshine all the lanterns. I will willingly comply with these two requests. But mention of the matter you asked about your religion and the people of your Prophet is feared even in front of your commoners, out of respect to might and power. So please excuse me from that matter."

The emir said, "You have spoken the truth, monk. Whoever follows a religion other than the true religion and does not abandon it sins against his own soul; whoever follows the true religion and abandons it, out of desire for wealth and worldly power or out of fear of death, earns misery for this life and the next; and whoever conceals his religion is doomed. I have no need for you to convert, but you must clarify your doctrine of the hypostases and Christ for us. It is indeed as you say, 'It is feared in front of our commoners,' but you will see no harm."[40]

The monk said, "May God increase the power of the emir! The sages say, 'Beware of mingling with kings in all circumstances. If you are afflicted with them[41] and want to be safe from them, keep your eyes away from their women, restrain your tongue from answering them, block your ears to their conversation, keep their secrets in the assemblies, follow their caprices with doting, and advise their servants with affection. But you can never stay safe from their anger, for there is no kinship between them and anyone else.'[42] So please excuse me of this matter."

The emir said to him, "When you said[43] that God teaches the opposite of what I say regarding my religion, your words kindled a fire in my heart. Know, monk, that I have loosened the tent-ropes of my kingdom and my dominion from all sides for you and have opened four gates for you. Enter through whichever gate you wish, with the safe-conduct of God and with my safe-conduct. You will not experience any harm or harsh treatment."

The monk said, "May God increase the power of the emir! The Muslims trivialize the lofty and grand and aggrandize the trivial and inconsequential,

for they have an oath without[44] expiation, namely the repudiation.*[45] If you wish, swear it to me. Otherwise let me go."

So he spoke, and the emir made the oath of repudiation that the monk would not experience any harm or harsh treatment from him. Then they parted.

The next day the monk arrived with a booklet, which read:

"You claimed, emir, that Christ is a Muslim *hanif* and that I imputed polytheism to Him. Know that with the name *hanif*s† all the Scriptures refer to idolaters and polytheists, and Christ enjoined the following in His holy Scripture, 'Do not walk in the path of the *hanif*s and do not enter the cities of the Samaritans.'[46]

"You claimed that I am far removed from Him and that He has nothing to do with me. How could that be when He says to the apostles, 'Believe in Me and the One who sent Me,'[47] for 'I am in the Father and the Father is in Me,'[48] and 'Whoever believes in Me, I am in him,'[49] and I believe as the apostles did?

"You claimed that I worship Him instead of God. God forbid that this should be so! I worship Him in God and I worship God in Him. He said, 'I and My Father are one,'[50] 'Whoever has seen Me has seen My Father,'[51] so I profess belief in Him.[52] Your own words confirm this: 'God aided Him with His Word and His Spirit.' How must One such as this have to be a prophet or a slave? He is God to be worshipped and Judge of the Last Judgment.

"You claimed that your Prophet is the seal of the prophets. May God prolong your life! He is not a prophet, but a king with whom God was pleased and in whom and through whom He fulfilled His promise to Abraham concerning Ishmael.

"You mentioned 'the community given mercy.' God's mercy abounds in all His creation, 'since He brings His sun up and sends His rain down for believers and unbelievers alike.'[53] None of them is favored over another. In this transient life, His mercy envelops all His creation, but in the life to come, He is master of His creation: if He forgives, it is through His grace; if He punishes, it is for sin.

"You mentioned 'the community loving its Prophet and his Family, helping them.' May God prolong your life! If you wish, I will speak the truth. By God, they have shed the blood of his Family, devastated their homes,

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* That is, the repudiation of the wife. The oath of repudiation (*yamin al-talaq*) meant that if the person who swore it did not fulfill his vow he had to divorce his wife. According to legal manuals, breaking this oath could not be expiated.

† While in the Muslim tradition the word carries connotations of right belief, in Eastern Christianity the opposite is the case: the word *hanpa* meant "pagan" in Syriac well before the rise of Islam, and this meaning was carried over to the Christian Arabic word *hanif*.

and plundered their possessions*[54]—as you well know! Which community could be more wicked than this? A man came to them, gave them dominion over the world, guaranteed them Paradise through his intercession, and they treat his Family as they have?! Anyone from other communities hearing of their actions would have only two ways to interpret their behavior: either they discovered the falsehood of their master and so regard it lawful[55] to do this to him and his Family, or they are the most wicked people on earth, for they repay the good deed of the man who called them to this and guaranteed them Paradise with iniquity.

"My lord, consider how little reason they have, how they bar themselves from entering Paradise, yet they call people to their religion and guarantee Paradise to them! He said to them, 'You and I are either in right guidance or in clear error.'[56] And he said, 'I do not know what will happen to you and me.'[57] And he said, 'Other than God, you have no intercessor and no helper.'[58] And he said, 'Be patient and endure, persevere and fear God, and perhaps you will meet with success.'[59] And he said, 'People, we created you from male and female, and divided you into nations and tribes, so that you may know each other. The dearest to God among you is the most God-fearing among you.'†[60]

"You claimed that God made the Commander of the Faithful powerful. May God indeed increase his power! Yet God had made unbelievers and polytheists powerful before him. Consider the power of the non-Arabs and their unbelief in God: yet God, may He be blessed and exalted, preserves them.[61] He governs His creation as He wishes.

"You claimed that God has rendered him secure day and night. May God make you prosper! By God, were the Commander of the Faithful to reside alongside his sons,[62] his cousins, and his brothers, he would live in fear of death for himself. The confirmation of this is that less than two hundred years have elapsed since the beginning of your dominion and you have already murdered seven caliphs, none of them an enemy or adversary of Islam.

"You mentioned the Qurʾan. I tell you that it was Muhammad who brought‡ this Qurʾan, and his Companions who wrote it down after his death. Here are some of their names: Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthman, ʿAli, ʿAbdallah ibn al-ʿAbbas, and Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan, the scribe of the revelation. After

* Quite a few events in the first two centuries of Islam qualify as attacks on the Family of the Prophet.

† With the citations in this paragraph, the monk implies that Muhammad himself was unsure about his mission and that the Muslims can only rely on their own piety when seeking salvation. Some of these verses were used by other Christian polemicists too.

‡ That is, authored it. The monk here rejects the Islamic dogma of the divine authorship of the Qurʾan.

them al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf gathered it and arranged it.[63] I also tell you, as you surely know yourself, that a group of you claims, 'Prophethood belonged not to Muhammad, but to ʿAli, and Gabriel[§] erred: he had intended to bestow it on ʿAli, but bestowed it instead on Muhammad.[¶64] This is confirmed by the way they call the children of ʿAli the children of the Messenger of God, for which community traces their ancestry through their mothers, if you tell the truth?!'[**65] Another group of you curses ʿAli and ʿUthman from the pulpits.[66] Yet another group of you claims that the authority belonged to Abu Bakr, ʿAli, ʿUmar, and ʿUthman.[67] Yet another group regards killing the descendants of al-ʿAbbas as a kind of sacrificial offering.[68] Three-quarters of you regard cursing Muʿawiya as a virtuous deed[69] and all of you testify against al-Hajjaj that he belongs to the people of Hell.[70] Which equitable judge, using this Scripture, would rule in favor of this community, if this is what you claim about your Prophet, his Family, and his Companions?[††]

"Regarding his profession of faith, 'God, there is no god but He': God had already revealed these words through Moses, His prophet and His blessed saint."

When the monk finished reading the booklet, the emir looked at him, red-eyed with anger. He glared at the monk for a while and said, "Son of obscenity,[71] you have uttered heinous things! Were you sure of death and in despair of life? Did you fortify yourself by saying, 'I will explain to him what I think: if I get away with it, it is to my benefit,[72] and if I am killed, I will die a martyr's death'? By God, were it not for your precaution and your cunning, you would have met your fate today!"

The monk said, "Emir! I did not say what I did out of disdain for or belittlement of Islam. I tried to avoid you as one flees a snake, but could not find a way."

The emir said to him, "Leave now what has passed and return to where we were. I hope that God will strike you down without delay."

The monk said, "May I be your ransom! You eyed me[73] as the hawk eyes its prey, with a look that made my locks curl with dread and my armpit soak with sweat. As the sage said, 'Do not blame the man who guards his tongue

§ In the Muslim tradition Gabriel is the angel who brings the revelation to Muhammad from heaven.

¶ An early Shiʿite sect held this belief.

** "The children of the Messenger of God" are the descendants of ʿAli and Fatima, Muhammad's daughter. Thus the group claiming that ʿAli was the true prophet did not trace their descent through their mother; only those (i.e., most Muslims) who considered Muhammad the true prophet did so. Here the Shiʿite sect is cited buttressing its position with the help of the habitual Muslim name for the descendants of ʿAli and Fatima ("they" in the last sentence refers to the majority of Muslims).

†† According to the argument in this paragraph, the Qurʾan had been assembled by people whose religious standing was disputed by Muslims to such an extent that their work cannot be trusted.

before kings, for their presence makes knees quiver, locks tremble, eyes darkle, hearts scamper, minds wander, jaws chitter, and tongues stammer.' This is on account of the nobility and dignity that they have been granted and the emir, may God increase his power, is among those whom God has favored above all kings. If you want me to clarify our doctrines to you, summon someone to debate with me, and I will debate with him in your presence."

So he spoke, and the emir summoned a man named al-Manzur ibn Ghatafan al-ʿAbsi and informed him about the case of the monk. The man approached the monk and said, "You, Christian, slanderer of God, focus your mind now and watch how you behave! Know that you now stand before a fire whose blaze no one can withstand, forever roaring and burning within its smoke."

The monk said, "I see you are ʿAmr, the brother of ʿAbla, who abandoned his sister in a foreign country and saved himself alone from calamity. I see none of the qualities of ʿAntar in you.*[74] I believe you are one of those who, when they hear the battle-cry, say, 'I will hasten there, shouting and bellowing, and they will take flight.' Put your trust in God and stay calm, for you are safe and well now. But know that if you are called 'a fire whose blaze no one can withstand,' then I am a sea whose roar no one can withstand. And when my sea meets the heat of your fire, it will douse and quench it."

The Muslim said, "There is no power except in God. Have your say about God."

The monk said, "No building is complete without foundation."

The Muslim said, "And what is the foundation of your building?"

The monk said, "The books of the Prophets and the apostles."

The Jew said, "We accept nothing from the books of the New Testament."

The Muslim said, "We accept nothing from either the Old or the New Testament, for we do not acknowledge them."

The monk said to them, "If you wish, the two of you will suffice for me, as you are rivals and will testify to the truth in my favor."[75]

The Muslim said, "How would that be?"

The monk said, "Do you not testify, Manzur, that Christ is the Word of God and His Spirit, that He was born from the Holy Maiden, the Virgin Mary, of the daughters of Israel, without intercourse or the sowing of human seed, that He performed signs and miracles, ascended to heaven, will come again, will destroy the Antichrist and everyone with him, and that there is no true Christ other than He?"

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* This passage refers to a pre-Islamic Arab hero, ʿAntar, who belonged to the ʿAbs tribe, just as the Muslim debater, al-Manzur ibn Ghatafan, does.

The Muslim said, "You speak the truth, monk. It is as you said about Christ."

Then he said to the Jew, "By the truth of *Ehye Asher Ehye*,*[76] by the truth of the ten commandments revealed through Moses, Aaron, and all the prophets, have you heard that God promised prophethood to Ishmael, or said that a prophet or a messenger would arise from his seed, or that Muhammad is mentioned in any of the Scriptures?"

The Jew said, "No, by God, none of the Scriptures mentions him or any of his descendants, nor did God grant him anything other than rule and power."

The emir said, "You are lying, you sinful man!" Then he said to him, "Return to where we were."

The Muslim said, "From where did you receive it, monk, that God is three hypostases?"

The monk said, "We received it from the apostles."

The Muslim said, "What did the apostles say?"

The monk said, "We, all nations and peoples, had been worshipping idols and other such things until John, son of Zechariah, the seal of the prophets, and the apostles[77] came to us and called us[78] to baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God. We were afraid of these names, but they said to us, 'Do not be afraid, for they are hypostases of the one God. The matter is not as you think:† we know God together with His Word and His Spirit as one substance and one God. When we say 'the Son of God,' we do not mean the son of a father and a mother, but the Word of God, begotten by Him without separation. We do not mean that He had existed prior to His Word and His Spirit, or that His Word and His Spirit are posterior to Him, but that the Word of God had always been light from light, true God from true God, from the substance of His Father, begotten Son from unbegotten Father, only-begotten Son from the Father without begetter,[79] perfect and uncreated from Him who is perfect and without defect, pure God from pure God. And the Paraclete Spirit is the hovering compassionate Spirit, forbearing Spirit from forbearing Father, extolled Spirit from worshipped Father. When we say 'Father,' we mean the omnipotent almighty God, who has no beginning or end, undergoes no change or annihilation. When we say 'Son,' we mean God, the eternal Word, who had existed from eternity and will never cease to exist. When we say 'Holy Spirit,' we mean God the Creator, the merciful and the compassionate.[80] Do not think that these names were revealed only through us: God had revealed them through the prophets before us, the name of the Father in one place,

* These three words are Hebrew for "I am who I am," as God introduces Himself to Moses in Exod. 3:14.

† That is, these are not, as one might think, three different gods.

the name of the Son in another place, and the name of the Holy Spirit in yet another place. This is our Book* that we brought you: accept it, for we have been sent to the nations and peoples as God's mercy for the world. Study the Torah and the books of the Prophets and if you find what we say to you confirmed by the testimonies of the Torah and the books of the Prophets, accept it, otherwise do not.'† We said to the apostles, 'May God repay you with good from all, you have accomplished your duty.'

"Then we studied the Torah and the books of the Prophets. We brought out the Gospel and behold, it is written in it, 'The Word has never ceased to be from eternity, the Word has never ceased to be with God, and God is the Word.'[81] Then we opened the Torah and behold, it says at the beginning, 'God's Spirit was hovering over the water.'[82] And we opened the Psalms and behold, it says, 'By the Word of God the heavens and the earth were created and the hosts of angels by the Spirit of His mouth.'[83] 'Through the might of God and the knowledge of His power, through His Word and His Spirit the waters of the seas were gathered, the mountains and hills made solid, the earth dried up and sprouted trees and shrubs, that which is in the sea and all the birds, beasts, and cattle were formed, the darkness lifted, and the lights of the luminaries shone forth.'[84] The prophet David said, 'Why did the nations roar and the peoples speak[85] falsehood? The kings of the earth and the rulers rose against the Lord and against His Christ. And they said,[86] "Let us cut their shackles and cast down their yoke!" He who dwells in heaven laughs at them and the Lord scoffs at them.'[87] With these words‡ David meant the eternal hypostases. He also said, 'He sent His Word and healed the world.'[88] And he also said, 'I praise the Word of God.'[89] He also said, 'You are from eternity, Lord, and Your Word is firm in heaven.'[90]

"God said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and say to him, "Let my son, my firstborn, Israel, go worship me on this mountain."' Moses said, 'Lord, if Pharaoh asks me and says, "What is the name of your God?" what should I say to him?' God said to him, 'Say to Pharaoh, "*Ehye Asher Ehye* sent me, *Ehye* dispatched me."'[91] Moses also said, 'Our Lord and our God is one God.'[92] David said, 'God, our God, will bless us.'[93]

"God said, 'Let Us create a man in Our image and Our likeness.'[94] God sowed in the hearts of the angels that He is one God and the angels said,

* That is, the Gospel.

† Here ends the monk's report of the teaching of the apostles. The next paragraphs summarize the study of the Bible that the converts undertook in response to the apostles' advice.

‡ "With these words," that is, with the expressions "the Lord," "His Christ," and "He who dwells in heaven."

'Today God will show us His image and His likeness.' Understand, you who listens to the words of God, that when He said, 'Let Us create man' and the angels said, 'Today God will show us His image,' He says of the three hypostases that they are one God.*[95]

"When God created Adam, He settled him in Paradise and said, 'Behold, Adam has become like one of Us.'[96] He did not say this because Adam himself had become so, but in His foreknowledge meant that there would come from the descendants of Adam the second Adam,† who is one of the hypostases, of the hypostases of the eternal God, and He would ascend to heaven and sit on the Throne. This is the reason that God said, 'Behold, Adam has become like one of Us.'

"And God said, 'Come, let Us descend and separate the languages.'[97] Understand, you who listens to the words of the glorified and exalted God, who cannot be described as descending or ascending, 'Come, let Us descend': He said this so that His slaves might know that He, His Word, and His Spirit are one substance and one God.

"The wise Solomon said, 'Who created the heavens and the earth? Who will judge the creatures? What is He? What is His name? What is the name of His Son, if you know?'[98] The righteous Job said, 'The Spirit of God created me, He taught me wisdom and understanding. He reigned over all with His Wisdom and will judge the creatures through His Spirit.'[99] The prophet Jeremiah said, 'Children of Israel, do not be distressed on account of my words, for it is not I who talks to you, of my own self, but the Spirit of God speaks on my tongue.'[100] The prophet Isaiah said, 'The grass withers, the creation changes, but the Word of God endures forever.'[101] Job also said, 'God is eternal in His Word and His Spirit, He walks on the sea as on land.'[102] Did any god walk on the sea, except Christ, whose light you now want to extinguish, although God, praise and glory be to Him forever, proclaims it and exalts it?"[103]

The emir asked those in attendance, "Is it true what the monk said?"

They said, "Yes, emir, and there is even more in the Scriptures than what he mentioned."[104]

The monk said to the Jew, "Do you not say that it is true what God said and what His prophets and messengers imparted?"

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* Because God speaks in it in plural, Gen. 1:26 became an important Christian prooftext for the Trinity. A dialogue between God and the angels, similar to this one, is narrated in *The Cave of Treasures* (chapter 2, verses 1–5), a late antique Syriac classic that was well known among the Christians of the Islamic world. The *Disputation* here is playing on the contrast between the Biblical text, which speaks of God in the plural, and the response of the angels, which does the same in the singular, and thus implies a plurality in the one God.

† The second Adam is Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 15:45–47).

The Jew said, "None but those who do not study the Scriptures would argue with you that God, His Word, and His Spirit are one."

The monk said, "What do you say, Muslim?"

The Muslim said, "We profess belief in God and His messengers, but we know that there can be no begetter who is not prior to his son."

The monk said to him, "You have spoken the truth, Muslim: every begetter is prior to his son, except for God, His Word, and His Spirit. The Word was begotten of Him, but not in an act of temporal creation, and emerged from Him without separation, but we call God 'Father.' For we know that the sun, the moon, and fire are created and we see that light is begotten from each,[105] but not in an act of temporal creation, and that heat emerges from each, but without separation. In the same way, God, His Spirit, and His Word are not divided or separated, and He had not existed prior to His Word and His Spirit, nor are His Word and His Spirit posterior to Him. We do not know God except through the Word and the Spirit. Had there been separation between God, His Word, and His Spirit, He would have a beginning and an end." [... ... ...]

The emir said, "Leave all this now. Tell me, why do you worship the cross and believe in it? It is but a piece of wood, of no use and no harm."

The monk said, "Emir, do you and these people all share the opinion that we worship the cross and prostrate before it?"

The emir said, "Yes."

The monk said, "My lord, these people cannot be blamed, for they summon to what they themselves were summoned to and they do not know whether they are right or wrong. But you?! God granted you valiance, ancestry and nobility, power and authority, as well as civility. Muhammad spoke of you when he said, 'Give precedence to Quraysh* and do not precede them, and learn from Quraysh and do not teach them, for the opinion of one man of Quraysh equals the opinion of ten others.'[106] How can someone with such a status agree to say that the Christians worship the cross? No, by my life, we do not worship it. Were we to worship it, we would not treat it as we do, displaying it on every mountain and in every place. But no one should blame the Christians for their love of the cross, because many successes—an untold number indeed—have come to them through it. This is because the cross is the standard of power, the banner of victory and of salvation from error. If a Christian professing belief in Christ and in the sign of the cross wished to drink lethal poison, to expel demons by force, or to enter fire naked,[107] in the name of Christ and with the sign of the cross he could do it."

* Quraysh is Muhammad's tribe, to which the emir too belongs.

When the monk said this, they shouted, "God is great!" And they said, "Our deliverance has come! Be assured, monk, that if you do these things, even one of them, you will have proved your case against all your opponents."

The monk said, "You should also perform miracles[108] in the name of the Black Stone,* as the Christians do in the name of Christ and the cross."

The Basran† said, "What miracle do you want us to perform for you?"

The monk said, "I ask nothing extravagant from you: heal an inflamed eye, reduce a fever, or cure a stomachache."

The Basran said, "Come with me to Mecca and I will show you at the Black Stone miracles superior to what you asked."

The monk said, "Know that the wood on which our Lord Christ was crucified is in the city of Constantinople, but in the name of Christ and with the sign of the cross it works miracles for Christians scattered to all four ends of the earth. None of them who wants some need satisfied or receives a request from someone invoking the cross will say to him, 'Come with me to the city of Constantinople,' but will hasten to fulfill the request through the cross. But you, Muslim, do you not profess that God is the Impenetrable, Muhammad a Prophet, Islam a true religion, the Qurʾan a true guide[109] and that the Sanctuary and the Black Stone, the Corner and the Station, Mecca and Mina,‡ and everything in them and surrounding them, which you all glorify, please and delight God?"

All of them said, "We testify that everything you said is true and there is no other true religion."

He said, "And what do you say of someone who rejects everything we said?"

The Basran said, "We say that he is an unbeliever who has earned misery for this life and the next."

The monk said, "Let God, His angels, and everyone present here be my witnesses that I believe in none of the things I mentioned[110] that belong to your Prophet and you."

The Basran said, "Woe unto you, monk, how great is your unbelief! You, Christians, do not believe in the resurrection and the rising from the dead."

The monk said, "Concerning the matter of resurrection and the rising from the dead, we have certainty and assurance, for we have seen the resurrection and the rising from the dead with our own eyes. But concerning the

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* The Black Stone, built into the southeastern corner of the Kaʿba, is part of the Meccan sanctuary, the site of the annual Muslim pilgrimage (*hajj*).

† He is the third Muslim debater, a pilgrim from Basra; he had been introduced into the story in an earlier section, omitted in the translation.

‡ These are all places to be visited during the *hajj*.

matter of resurrection and the rising from the dead, you and the Jews have naught but hope."

The Basran said, "How is that?"

The monk said, "Moses came to the Children of Israel and said to them, 'Children of Israel, the resurrection will take place and God will make the dead rise from their graves.' Yet Moses died and was not resurrected and did not rise from the dead. Then Muhammad came to you and said to you, 'Muslims, the resurrection will take place and God will make the dead rise from their graves.' Yet Muhammad died and was not resurrected. But Christ came to us and said, 'People, the resurrection will take place through Me and God will make the dead rise from their graves.' And He died and was buried, and He was resurrected and rose from the dead alive, ascended to heaven and will come again. Therefore, our Master confirmed this matter for us, but your master gave you naught but hope."

The emir said to the chief of his police, "Do you have anyone locked up who deserves death?"

He said to the emir, "Yes, an Arab, a bandit and highwayman, was sent to me. He has been sentenced to be executed."

He said,[111] "Send for him." He brought in the bandit.

The emir said to him, "What do you say about the claims of this monk?"

The accursed Bedouin said, "I will do what he does if the exalted God wills it."

They all said, "Call, emir, for lethal poison and give us rest from this monk."[112]

The emir ordered his physician to bring him instantly killing poison.[113] He brought it and a drink was mixed for him. The monk took it and said, "In the name of Christ whom the Jews crucified in this town." He made the sign of the cross over it, drank the poison, and was not affected by pain at all.

The emir said to his physician,[114] "Mix the same for this Muslim."

The monk said, "No, by my life, let him mix it for himself and let him say over it what had been mentioned earlier."

They all said, "Yes."

That Muslim took the drink of poison and said, "'God is one, God is the Impenetrable, He did not beget and was not begotten, and there has not been anyone equal to Him.'* I testify that You are the Impenetrable, that Muhammad is Your Prophet, that Islam is Your religion, and that there is no other true religion." Then he drank it. When the drink reached his bowels, he dropped the goblet and collapsed. They took his hand and behold, his flesh disintegrated and fell off.

* Almost a full quotation of Qurʾan 112, only its first word is missing.

The emir said, "Wrap him and bury him in the stables."

Then the emir said, "My brother presented me with a slave-girl from Raqqa.* I loved her passionately, but she has been possessed by an *ʿifrit*."†

The monk said, "Bring her in, emir."

When the monk saw her, he made the sign of the cross over her face and said, "By the power of my Lord Jesus Christ and His exalted cross, leave this woman." The slave-girl shouted, fell to the ground, and before their eyes the demon went out from her, like smoke. The monk took her hand, made her sit up, and called for a glass of water. He made the sign of the cross over it, gave it to her to drink, and she became as if she had never been unwell.

They all said, "Only fire will bring certainty."

The monk said to the emir, "Give me rest, my lord. You have already kept me from many tasks."

They said to the emir, "Order wood to be brought in to light a fire."

The emir said, "What could we do with firewood? Let us call instead for a brazier full of embers." So they did.

The monk stood up and prayed, saying, "God, not to us, but to Your name bring glory and honor, so that these adversaries might know that You are truly the Christ, the Son of the living God."[115]

He made the sign of the cross, put both his hands in the brazier, and started to turn them over the fire. When the boys in the service of the emir, who had been Christians and had converted to Islam at his hands, saw this, they stood up, as did the two Jews, and prostrated themselves before him and professed belief in Christ that He is the eternal Son of the living God.

The monk said, "Praise be to God, who does not keep His slaves from His mercy, who revives the earth after it was dead. Him we ask for help in obeying Him." He gave thanks to God and said, "By God, 'the angels truly rejoice when one sinner repents,'[116] as our Lord said."

They said to him, "Baptize us."

The monk said, "I am a stranger here. I came to pray and seek blessing from these holy places. But the patriarch and the bishops are present. Go to whomever you choose among them and they will not withhold from you the blessing of the Holy Spirit, for it abounds and encompasses all creatures."

The emir said to those in attendance, "What do you say?"

They said, "These are powerful miracles that the Christian has performed. Let it be as you see fit."

The emir said to them, "What do you say about these who professed belief in Christ?"

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* A city in northern Syria, on the bank of the Euphrates.

† A powerful jinni in Arab demonology.

They said to him, "We cannot do anything with the two Jews, for they have left unbelief for faith in Christ and they will pay the poll-tax.*[117] But these two, who had been Muslims and renounced Islam, should have their heads chopped off. Imprison this monk until you have made up your mind about what to do with him."

The emir called for the leather mat and the sword and had them beheaded, and so they received glorious martyrdom.†[118]

Then he ordered the monk to be imprisoned. The monk said to the emir, "By God, this is not what I had hoped for from you, nor was this the promise and the pledge."

The emir said, "You will see no harm." They took him to the prison.

In the dead of night, the emir called for the monk and asked him, "Do you wish to live in our country that I may favor you, grant you land, and take care of you? Or do you want me to let you go on your way?"

The monk answered, saying, "Let me go."

The emir granted him permission to go, rewarded him, and sent him away in peace.

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* Muslim jurists disagreed with regard to non-Muslim converts to Christianity: some held that after the coming of Islam it was not permissible to convert to any religion other than Islam, while others regarded such conversions as permissible. The leniency shown toward the Jewish converts to Christianity here reflects the latter opinion.

† In most martyrologies of Christians written in the Islamic world, the Muslim authorities try to convince the apostates to repent and execute them only if they refuse, in accordance with Muslim law. For more on Arab Christian neo-martyrs, see the next chapter.

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Chapter 4

Hagiography

سير القديسين

John C. Lamoreaux

The Arab Christian tradition is rich with saints and with works devoted to them. Such works come in many forms. They may be calendars marking their festivals, services or homilies in their honor, accounts of their lives and records of their wisdom, stories of the discovery of their relics or of miracles associated with their remains, their icons, and their monasteries. Such works are used daily in churches and monasteries. They are not written just for the study. The genre is practical and as such has two main ends: to regulate the veneration of the saints and to inspire in those venerating them saintly lives of their own.

It is difficult to speak of Arab Orthodox hagiography separately from Byzantine hagiography. Both Middle Eastern Orthodox Christians and Byzantines had been bequeathed a shared tradition and had grown to maturity together. When Islam arrived on the scene, contacts between the two continued, especially in border lands, which were sometimes under Muslim rule, sometimes under the Byzantines, including the city of Antioch and its monastic centers, in which Arab Christians, Georgians, and Greeks lived side by side throughout those political and military transitions. Furthermore, Mount Sinai and the monasteries in and around Jerusalem were inhabited by monks from all over the Christian world. The diversity of their populations and their shared culture facilitated the transmission of hagiographic works. Cultus and literature were thus continually shared between the Arab Orthodox and their brothers and sisters across the border. This is especially true when works were written in Greek, as were so many Syro-Palestinian texts in the early centuries of Muslim rule, including popular works such as the life of Saint Theodore of Edessa[1] or the hagiographic romance of Bar-

laam and Ioasaph,[*2] which so quickly spread beyond their lands of origin. But in what sense are these or other similar works written in or translated into Arabic to be regarded as "Arab Orthodox"? Such works and their authors may perhaps better be seen as regional participants in a religious tradition that transcends ethnic and linguistic boundaries.

It is easier to speak of a distinct Arab Orthodox tradition of hagiography in the case of local saints: humble men and women from the hardscrabble farms of central Syria and rural Palestine, whose fame extended only to the villagers among whom they lived and died or to the residents of their own monastery. The Arab Christian tradition has preserved the memory of many hundreds of these forgotten saints.[3] Some lived in the mountains of northern Iraq, others on farms in what is now southern Turkey; yet others flourished in monasteries at the desert's edge in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. Despite their intrinsic importance as eloquent witnesses to the Christian faith under Muslim rule, their lives, unfortunately, were seldom of interest to Orthodox Christian communities living outside the Muslim world.

The present chapter treats of three such forgotten saints, all from the Orthodox Church of Syria and Palestine in the early centuries of its life under Muslim rule. Two were likely historical persons, while one is apparently a literary creation, to publicize the virtues of a regional church. Each of the three texts translated here recounts the martyrdom of a Muslim convert to Christianity—a capital crime in traditional Islamic law.

The first text is set in Syria, in the closing years of the troubled eighth century. It tells of a noble Muslim tribesman named Rawh. He lives in Damascus, in an expropriated monastery, and constantly harasses the monastery's still-functioning church. On the altar-curtain of the church is painted an icon of its patron, Saint Theodore. One day, Rawh launches an arrow at this icon of the saint—in mid-flight, it turns and returns to strikes his hand. He next sees a Eucharistic vision: a priest kills and dismembers a child; congregants commune on its flesh and blood. He then receives a visitation from the saint himself. Now convinced of the truth of the Christian faith, Rawh goes to Jerusalem for baptism, only to be passed on to the monastic communities of the deserts of Jordan. Monks there baptize him, giving him the Christian name Anthony and tonsuring him a monk. On his return to Damascus, Anthony is apprehended for apostasy and sent to the caliph in Raqqa,[†] who orders his execution. Anthony is stoned and gibbeted on the

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* This famous Christian romance was apparently compiled in Greek ca. 985 by the Georgian monk Euthymius of Mount Athos, based on an earlier work in Georgian, and ultimately on an Arabic composition, going back to Sanskrit sources on the life of the Buddha.

† Ancient Callinicus in Syria, some 150 miles east of Aleppo, on the Euphrates.

shores of the Euphrates, on December 25, 799 CE. His remains are interred at ʿUmr al-Zaytun (The Monastery of the Olives), in the city of Raqqa.

The Passion is anonymous but may have been written in one of the Palestinian monasteries. Its original language was almost certainly Arabic. It must have been composed after 799, the date of its protagonist's death, but before the tenth century, the date of the earliest known copy.

The Passion exists today in two main recensions. The first (A) is contained in a manuscript of the tenth century: Sinai ar. 513, fol. 363r–372v, and in a number of other early and late manuscripts. It has been edited and translated many times, most recently: Dick (1961), with French translation; Pirone (1999), with Italian translation; and Braida and Pelissetti (2001), with Italian translation. The second (B) is found in two thirteenth-century manuscripts: Sinai ar. 445, fol. 437r–447v and Sinai ar. 448, fol. 95v–99r. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala has recently (2008) argued that recension B is older than A. His arguments are convincing. Recension A, on the other hand, rewrites and simplifies B, to bring it more closely into accord with later stylistic and linguistic sensibilities. Monferrer-Sala has prepared the first and only edition of recension B. He takes Sinai ar. 445 as his base manuscript. He also provides the full texts of the other two Sinai manuscripts in his introduction, where they are set in columnar form for easy comparison. The present translation follows Monferrer-Sala's edition of recension B.[4]

The second text opens in south Arabia and is set in the early years of the ninth century. A Christian Arab named Qays ibn Rabiʿ al-Ghassani is setting out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In quick order, he falls in with certain Muslims who convince him to join them in waging jihad against the Byzantines. Time passes; he becomes a Muslim and spends many years on the field of battle. One year, he winters in Baalbek, a city in Lebanon, and suddenly the words of the Gospel provoke him to repentance. Now known as ʿAbd al-Masih, or the Servant of Christ, he embarks on the life of a monk at the famous monastery of Mar Saba, in the Judean wastes, but eventually makes his way to Sinai. There he lives a life of devotion and service and eventually is ordained abbot. One day he is apprehended by a former companion from the jihad. He is taken in bonds to the Palestinian city of Ramla, where the governor convicts him of apostasy and orders him executed by the sword. To prevent Christians from recovering the saint's remains, the governor orders the body and the head to be thrown into an abandoned well at Baliʿa, near Ramla, and then burnt. After nine months, monks from Sinai arrive and secretly recover the remains, which are divided between Sinai and Ramla. He is commemorated on March 9, the day of his death, which took place ca. 857 CE.[5]

The Passion was likely written by a monk at Mount Sinai. It must have been composed after ca. 857, the year of the saint's death, but before the late ninth or early tenth century, the date of the early manuscript.

Of the text's manuscripts, three are of special importance. The oldest witness is Sinai ar. 542. It dates to the late ninth or early tenth century and presents the earliest form of the text, written in a popular form of Arabic, which often diverges from the canons of classical Arabic. A later author rewrote the text, to correct and improve its humble language, with a view to the liturgical reading of the text. This second recension is found in two thirteenth-century manuscripts: British Library or. 5019 (originally from Sinai) and Sinai ar. 396.

In 1985, Sidney H. Griffith prepared an edition and English translation of the Passion. He took Sinai ar. 542 as his base manuscript and presented variants from the British Library manuscript. (The second Sinai manuscript was not accessible.) In 2001 Mark N. Swanson offered important corrections and improvements to Griffith's edition, based on a fresh examination of the same two manuscripts.[6]

More recently, in 2003, Yossi Soffer, under the guidance of Sarah Stroumsa, completed a master's thesis at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with a new edition of the text. He took Sinai ar. 542 as his base and included a full collation of both later manuscripts. Soffer's thesis also includes a revised version of Griffith's translation. The present translation follows Soffer's excellent edition. In a very few instances alternative readings were offered. These are signaled in the annotations.

The third text is set in Palestine, in the early centuries of Muslim rule. It opens with an account of how an unnamed Syrian ruler's relative stables his camels in the church of Saint George in the Palestinian city of Lydda—and receives a divine rebuke. There follows a Eucharistic vision like that found in the Passion of Saint Anthony: the killing and dismemberment of a child and the partaking of its flesh and blood. Following his conversion the young man receives baptism in Jerusalem and becomes a monk at Sinai. After a time, he desires martyrdom and returns to Lydda. He is apprehended and taken before his relative, the ruler, and a theological dialogue ensues. When the young man refuses to abandon his Christian faith, he suffers death by stoning. He is buried in an unspecified location. No date is given for his commemoration.

The tale is beautiful and well crafted. It is also folkloric. Earlier sources are being combined to demonstrate the sanctity of the shrine of Saint George in Lydda. The text's outline and a number of its episodes are perhaps based on the Passion of Saint Anthony or on some other, shared source or sources.

Other episodes were perhaps taken from the Passion of Saint ʿAbd al-Masih or perhaps from other, still earlier sources.[7]

The tale is attributed to a certain John, the bishop of Monembasia. Monembasia is a small peninsula located in the southeast corner of the Peloponnese. The episcopal see dates from the early Byzantine period. While its early history is obscure, it had at least one bishop named John. He is mentioned in the letters of Theodore of Stoudios, who places him in Rome in the years 815 and 817 and says that he campaigned there for the cause of icons.[8]

As for John, he claims to transmit the tale from a certain general (Ar. *qaʾid*, Gr. *strategos*)* named Nicholas, also called Julianus. This man seems to be otherwise unknown. The historical record has many references to *strategoi* named Nicholas, and many references to *strategoi* named Julianus, but seemingly none to one known by both names.

The tale has been widely preserved in the collections of Saint George's miracles, in Greek and Arabic, as well as in Georgian. A systematic investigation of the textual tradition of this tale has yet to be undertaken. Nonetheless, based on a preliminary survey of a portion of the manuscripts, one may hazard a few tentative suggestions.

There are a number of Arabic recensions of the tale. The one translated here (A1) is the oldest. The others rewrite A1: making its simple style more ornate, lengthening its speeches, clarifying obscurities, and expanding its sparse narrative details.

Four recensions of the tale are also known in Greek (*BHG* 690). A1 most resembles G1, the so-called "*Logos Historikos*," usually attributed to Gregory of Dekapolis (d. ca. 842), perhaps wrongly.[9] At times, though, especially in the case of speeches, A1 aligns more closely with G4, a version preserved in post-classical Greek.[10]

In what language was the tale originally written? It is hard to imagine an early Byzantine bishop of Monembasia writing in Arabic, much less finding an audience for a work in Arabic. On the other hand, if the tale was first written in Greek, one wonders why a bishop of Monembasia might have been interested in Saint George's shrine in Lydda or might have gained access to the Passion of Anthony, which was unknown in Greek. At the same time, the Arabic version of the tale gives no indication of having been translated from Greek but throughout reads like an original composition in Arabic. The opposite holds of the Greek, especially in the case of toponyms

* The duties of a *strategos* varied with place and time but by the early Byzantine period designated the man charged with governing and defending the so-called "themes," the territorial and administrative divisions of the empire.

and titles. In short, some indications suggest that the tale was written in Greek while other evidence suggests Arabic.[11]

For now, it may be best to set to one side the question of the original. Before a satisfactory answer could be given, it would be necessary to undertake a much fuller analysis of the Greek and Arabic textual traditions of both the tale and the various collections in which it is found. In the end, whatever the original language, the Arabic preserves a version of the text seemingly older than those presently known in Greek.

The Arabic version of the tale seems never to have been edited. The present translation has been made from a preliminary edition, prepared from three manuscripts: Balamand ar. 157, fol. 17r–21v (17th c.); Mingana Chr. Arab. 83 [no. 44], fol. 197v–203v (1255 CE); and Sinai ar. 507, fol. 141r–147v (1273 CE).

Translation

A. The Passion of Saint Anthony Rawh

The Story of Saint Anthony, Who Suffered Martyrdom in the City of Raqqa, in the days of Harun al-Rashid.*

In the days of Harun al-Rashid, there was a certain man, a nobleman and an Arab, by the name of Rawh. He lived in the city of Damascus, in a place called al-Nayrab, which is outside the Bab al-Hadid,† in a monastery there, in which there was a church dedicated to the name of the blessed martyr Theodore.‡

This young man from Quraysh§ was disrespectful to the church and used often to steal and eat the holy oblation and drink such blood of our Lord Christ as remained in the chalice. Sometimes, too, he used to pull the crosses from their places and shamelessly rip up the altar cloth. Many times, too, he used to mock the priest and the other people attending the liturgy.

The residence of this man from Quraysh overlooked the church, and he used to watch all that the flock of Christ did there on Sunday, including the procession of the sacred gifts. He used to sit there, devoting himself to drink

* ʿAbbasid caliph, r. 786–809.

† Nayrab was a suburb of Damascus, to the north and east of the city, through the Gate of Iron or Bab al-Hadid in the citadel of Damascus (not to be confused with the village Nayrab outside Aleppo and the famous Bab al-Hadid in Aleppo).

‡ Saint Theodore the Tyro of Amasea, the widely venerated military martyr of the fourth century, whose memory is celebrated on February 17.

§ Quraysh is the Arab tribe to which both the founder of Islam, Muhammad, and the Muslim caliphs after him belonged.

and dissolution, while the children of baptism were devoting themselves to their liturgy and their prayers.

One Sunday, the priest finished the liturgy, lowered the curtain before the altar,* locked the church's door, and then left. This young man from Quraysh peered out[12] through his window at the western end of the church and saw a picture of Saint Theodore at the eastern end of the church. The saint was astride a gray horse and was carrying a lance in his hand. Beneath him there was a picture of a great dragon, whose head the saint had shattered with the butt of his spear.

Immediately, the young man rose to his feet and took up his bow. He fitted an arrow, took aim at the picture of the martyr, and shot. The arrow reached to within a foot of the picture of the saint, or perhaps less. Then, by the power of God—may his name be exalted!—the arrow turned around and returned, all the way to the left hand of Rawh of Quraysh—and it struck[13] his palm, penetrating it entirely.[14]

On seeing what had happened, the young man was terrified and cried out. With much effort, he pulled the arrow from his palm. He then passed out from the pain and from a sickness that befell him, but no one knew about this.

Some days later, the festival of the holy Saint Theodore took place.[15] Many clergy and lay people from Damascus gathered in the church for prayer. When it was time for the liturgy, this young man of Quraysh sat at his window, as was his custom.

The priests came forth with[16] the sacred gifts. They carried the oblation on patens,[17] chalices full of wine, an elevated cross, lit candles, and pure incense.†[18] The others in attendance were standing for the procession and were praising God, singing hymns to Him, and glorifying Him.[19]

As for this young man of Quraysh, he saw on the Eucharistic paten something like a lamb. It was as white as snow and was kneeling. Above it there was a dove hovering[20] with its wings. This is what he saw, until they all reached the altar.

After the Eucharistic paten and the chalice had been placed on the altar and the oblation had been covered, that dove ascended a bit. It hovered above the altar and above the heads of the priests, as they were giving praise and singing hymns.

As the liturgy continued, after they had reached the *Our Father*, which they all recited together, and then had elevated the oblation, while glorifying God and offering long prayers to him, and the time for partaking of the holy

* The curtain here serves as an iconostasis. The icon of Saint Theodore is apparently painted on it.

† This is the Great Entrance, where the deacons and priests carry the sacred Gifts (the Eucharist to be consecrated) from the proskomedia table to the nave and then to the altar table.

oblation had come, he then watched as the priest dismembered that lamb, limb by limb, and as the people came forward to partake of it, from the hands of the bishop, who offered them some of that flesh, one piece after another.

Rawh was thoroughly astounded at this and began to reflect to himself, saying, "Glory be to God, how astonishing is the Christian religion! In truth, it is a venerable and true religion."

The people finished receiving the Eucharist. [The clergy] then took back into the sanctuary the last of the sacred gifts[21] and what was left of the oblation, as well as the other things. As this was happening, the young man saw that the dove fluttered above them as they were in procession [back to the sanctuary] and that the lamb had become whole again, restored to its initial state.

Already astounded, this caused him to be still more bewildered.

He quickly descended from his residence and stood at the door of the church. He began to inquire of the priests and all who were leaving, "People, today I have seen a great wonder regarding your religion. It is contrary to what I have seen on earlier occasions when you were celebrating your liturgy. Before today,[22] I used to see you partake of bread, plain and white. But just moments ago, I watched as you partook of pieces of flesh and as you drank {something like blood from the hands of the deacon. Truly},[23] yours is a most venerable religion."

After listening to his account, the priests and those present gave glory to Christ the Savior, who "reveals His mysteries and makes them known"[24] to whom He wills. They departed full of joy and happiness, discussing with one another what had been said to them by Rawh, the man from Quraysh who lived above the church of Saint Theodore.

That night, while everyone else was asleep, this young man from Quraysh kept vigil, pondering what he had witnessed that day. Then suddenly, with the crowing of the cock, the blessed martyr Saint Theodore came to him, armed with his weapons and riding on his horse.

He addressed the young man loudly, "You have hurt me by what you have done: you mocked my temple, you shot my icon, you ate the body of Christ my Lord, you tore up the cloth of my altar, you held the servants of my church in contempt. Abandon, now, this attitude of yours and believe in the Lord Christ. Forgo your tyranny and accept life and victory—through this demonstration [of God's power]."

The saint then disappeared, and the young man from Quraysh began to reflect. He was afraid,[25] but faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was kindled in his heart.

When it was morning, he mounted his horse, and taking just a few

provisions, he set out on the road used by pilgrims.[26] {He traveled to the place of assembly for pilgrims},[27] which is called al-Kiswa*[28] and is located ten miles from Damascus. By the grace of Christ, he arrived there just as the pilgrims were leaving for Jerusalem, and he traveled on with them until he reached that blessed place.

Entering into the presence of the holy and blessed Abba Elias, the patriarch,†[29] he told him what he had seen, how the martyr came to him, and what he had been told by him.

On hearing his story, the patriarch gave thanks to Christ and said, "My son, the mysteries of Christ are great,[30] and He reveals them[31] to whom He wishes. Is there anything you want, my son?"

The young man replied, "I want you to baptize me."

The patriarch answered, "I cannot do this, for fear of the authorities. Instead, you should go to the river Jordan, with the [other] men [here]. The Lord Christ shall provide you[32] someone to baptize you in private."

The young man listened[33] to what he had to say, and after receiving his blessing, he immediately departed for the Jordan.

He got as far as the Monastery of Choziba,‡ where there is a church dedicated to the name of our Lady the Virgin Mary. About halfway through the night, he saw a woman, one most perfect in stature. She was dressed in clothes of purple. She was accompanied by another woman, who was dressed in clothes of white. She took him by the hand and woke him[34] from his sleep. To him she said, "Be not sad, for I am with you."

When it was morning, he received a blessing from the church and was filled with joy and happiness.

At last he reached the river Jordan, the place where the Lord Christ was baptized. There he found two monks from the Monastery of Saint John,§ who were living the life of itinerants. This young man of Quraysh hastened to them and fell at their feet and asked them to baptize him in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They agreed to his request.

They ordered him to remove his clothes and go down into the water. He did this with great joy—even though it was an intensely cold day. They then

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* A city just south of Damascus, whence caravans would start for Mecca. Here, though, it is a question of Christian pilgrims going to Jerusalem.

† Elias II, Patriarch of Jerusalem in 770–97 CE.

‡ A famous monastic foundation, to the west of Jericho, in the northern side of the Wadi Qilt, just off the main road that runs from Jerusalem to the spot on the Jordan where now the Allenby Bridge is located.

§ This is apparently the monastery associated with the church of John the Baptist, on the eastern shore of the Jordan, some nine miles north of the Dead Sea.

baptized him in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When he rose from the water, they made the sign of the cross over him and blessed him. They then took him to their monastery, which was near the river, and provided him with hospitality and treated him as an honored guest.

He asked them to tonsure him a monk, which they did, saying, "From this day forward, you shall be called Anthony." They then clothed him in the holy schema* and sent him on his way in the peace of Christ.

The blessed Anthony departed and returned to Damascus, to his own neighborhood and to the people of his house—now dressed[35] as a monk.

When the people of his neighborhood saw him, they were astounded and said, "What is it that you've done to yourself? What is this habit and these woolen clothes we see you wearing?"

He replied, "I am a Christian, a believer in my Lord Christ. What business is that of yours and what do you want from me?"

After conversing with him and debating with him for some hours, when they found that they could not shake him from his holy faith, they began to drag him through Damascus, market by market,[36] until they reached the qadi.†

On seeing him and how he was followed by a huge crowd of Muslims and non-Muslims, the qadi said to him, "Alas for you, Rawh! Why have you abandoned the religion in which you were born and your honorable lineage, so as to become a Christian?"

The blessed man replied, "These are trivial matters when it comes to the good pleasure of my Lord Jesus Christ. You should thus give whatever orders you wish."

After hearing his reply, the qadi ordered him to be beaten. He then threw him into prison. He stayed in a Damascus prison for the next seven months. After that, he was transferred to a dark building, known as the Dungeon, in which there were bandits, Ethiopians,[37] and thieves—men guilty of crimes other than murder.[38] He stayed with these men for seventeen days and seventeen nights and was subjected to punishment.

On the eighteenth night, a light suddenly shone[39] on him and illuminated the place where he was, as well as the whole prison. He then heard a voice saying, "Fear not, Anthony, you are among the elect: I have prepared felicity and a crown for you, together with the martyrs and all the saints."

Those with him in prison saw this light and informed the guards, and the guards went and informed the qadi. When the qadi heard about this wonder, he ordered[40] that Anthony be removed from the Dungeon and imprisoned

* The monastic habit.

† The Muslim judge.

with the men of Quraysh and the other Arabs. As for his fellow Arabs there, they kept annoying him with arguments and quarrels and were maligning him for adhering to the Christian faith. Yet Christ the Savior aided him and inspired him with proofs to use against them.

One night, just before dawn, he saw two elders dressed in white. One had a chandelier full of lamps, and it burned with neither water nor oil.[41] The other had a crown, which he took and placed on Anthony's head.

When dawn came, the saint was full of joy at what he had seen, when suddenly messengers from the qadi arrived. They entered and arranged for his release from the prison where he was being held. They then conveyed him to the city of Aleppo, making use of the *barid*-post.*[42] From there he was taken down the Euphrates, as far as Raqqa. He was then turned over to the governor of the city, a man named Harthama, who imprisoned him and put him in bonds.†

When news of this reached the Caliph al-Rashid, he commanded that Anthony be released[43] from prison and set free from his fetters and that he be brought to him.

When he arrived in al-Rashid's presence and stood before him,[44] the caliph said to him, "You unfortunate man, Rawh, what has induced you to do this to yourself, to cast away your noble status and put on these clothes? If you need money, I'll give it to you and elevate your status and show you more[45] favors. Abandon these thoughts of yours and cease letting yourself be led astray."

The blessed Anthony answered him, "In truth, I haven't been led astray, but guided, and I've come to believe in the Lord Christ, who came into the world to enlighten and save all who seek Him and strive for His good pleasure. I am today a Christian, one who believes in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

After hearing his answer, al-Rashid commanded that he be beheaded.

The saint said, "In truth, you have fulfilled my request, and your command, today, has caused me to attain[46] what I desire—and this, because I have sinned against my Lord three times and I do not think that my sins can be erased unless I am beheaded."

Al-Rashid then asked him, "And what are these three misdeeds?"

The saint answered him, "First, many times, while still a Muslim,[47] I

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* The *barid* developed from the late Roman *cursus publicus*, which was a system of roads and way stations to convey messages, men, and goods.

† Very likely, the famous Harthama ibn Aʿyan, who held a variety of high offices under Harun al-Rashid. When the events of this text took place, the caliph was residing in Raqqa (in 796–809), and Harthama was the captain of his guard.

prayed in Mecca, at the Bayt al-Haram.* And truly, as is indicated by its name, God has declared it forbidden (*haram*) for those who believe in Christ. Secondly, I slaughtered and sacrificed on the Day of Immolation (*yawm al-adha*).† Thirdly, I participated in razzias‡ against Byzantine territory and killed persons who believed in Christ. And now, it is my hope that through my beheading God will erase these sins from me and will baptize me in my own blood."

When al-Rashid had heard[48] him say these words and had come to understand his disposition, he had him beheaded—a believer in the Lord Christ. They then gibbeted him on the shore of the Euphrates.

Al-Rashid also gave orders to station guards at his gibbet, to prevent Christians from getting close to it. Every night, when people were sleeping, these guards used to see a candelabrum[49] of light descend from heaven and come to rest above his head. They would be filled with wonder and would contemplate the meaning of this marvel.[50] Many of those who saw this candelabrum came to believe.

News of this reached al-Rashid, and he gave orders for him to be brought down from the gibbet and buried. They then took him and buried him in a place known as ʿUmr al-Zaytun,[51] which is near the Euphrates, in the city of Raqqa.

This saint, Mar Anthony, was martyred on the day of the glorious Nativity, following the liturgy, on December 25, in the year 183 of the era of the Arabs.§

Glory be to God, for ever and ever.

We ask our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ to have mercy on us, through the prayers of this venerable martyr Anthony, to grant us to share with him in the Kingdom of Heaven, and to forgive our entire community. Amen.

Through the intercession of Lady Mary, the Mother of Light. Amen.

B. The Passion of Saint ʿAbd al-Masih al-Ghassani

The Passion of Our Holy Father ʿAbd al-Masih, Abbot of Mount Sinai, Who Suffered Martyrdom in the City of Ramla.

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* The Sacred or Forbidden House, that is, the Kaʿba.

† The tenth day of the month of pilgrimage, when Muslims in Mecca and throughout the world undertake a ritual sacrifice.

‡ The term refers to the annual excursions by Muslim warriors (*ghazi*s) against non-Muslim territories bordering the lands of Islam, often to acquire spoils and slaves rather than territory.

§ That is, 799 CE.

There was a Christian man from Najran,* named Rabiʿ ibn Qays ibn Yazid al-Ghassani. He was one of the most noble of the Christian Arabs of Najran. He was Orthodox, and understood well his prerogatives and his duties.

One day, when he had turned twenty, he conceived a desire to pray in Jerusalem. He set out in the company of certain Muslim residents of Najran who were going to participate in razzias.[52] While he was in their company, they ceaselessly sought to entice him and lead him astray, in order that he might join them in undertaking razzias—and this, as he was exceptionally skillful at shooting a bow, striking with a sword, and thrusting with a lance. The result was that ignorance, youth, and "bad company"[53] induced him to enter Byzantine territory with the *ghazi*s.†

At their side, he waged jihad, he fought and killed, he plundered and burned. He trampled on all that is sacred—after their example. He even prayed with them. He attacked the people of Byzantium, more piteously and callously even than they. For thirteen years he devoted himself every year to razzias.

After so many years it happened that he was making his way to a city in Syria, where he was to winter. On entering Baalbek at midday, he proceeded on horseback straight to a church there. On entering, he saw a priest sitting at the door of the church, where he was reading the Gospel.

Al-Ghassani sat beside him and listened. He then asked, "Priest, what is it that you're reading?"

The priest answered, "I'm reading the Gospel."

He replied, "Translate for me what you're reading."

The priest translated for him, "If someone loves mother or father or brother, or anything more than Me, he is not worthy of Me."[54]

When the priest had read this, al-Ghassani began to weep, as he contemplated what he had been and what he now was.

After he had wept much, the priest asked him, "What's the matter with you, young man?"

Al-Ghassani answered, "Don't fault me for weeping. I was once a follower of this Gospel. Today, however, I am one of its enemies. Listen while I tell you my story."

The priest listened to his story and then asked him, "If you regret what you've done, is there any reason you shouldn't return and repent?"

Al-Ghassani answered, "My situation is very grave. There are things I know about myself that the heights and depths could not endure knowing."

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* A city in southwest Arabia and home to large Christian and Jewish populations in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period.

† That is, Muslim raiders.

The priest replied, "Haven't you heard the Gospel? 'What men cannot endure is easy for God.'[55] And again, 'God delights more in the return of one sinner than in the return of one hundred righteous men.'[56] Indeed, my beloved brother, know this, that God comes to us more quickly [to forgive] than we come to him [to repent]. You've read the Gospel, as you mentioned, so remember the thief and the prodigal son."[57]

The young man stood up and prayed, right there in the church, and taking his weapons, he threw them in front of the altar and vowed to God that he would not return to his former way of life, after which the priest performed the Rite of Sanctification,*[58] for the forgiveness of his sins. He then went and sold his horse and weapons and gave the money as alms to the poor, following which the priest celebrated the Eucharist and gave him communion. Thereupon, he bade farewell to the priest and departed for Jerusalem.

On arrival in Jerusalem, al-Ghassani put on clothes of black, entered the presence of the patriarch, Abba John,† and recounted his story. The patriarch encouraged him and strengthened him and rejoiced in him. He then prayed for him and sent him on to the abbot of the Lavra of Sabas,‡ so that he might tonsure him a monk.

Al-Ghassani traveled to the monastery and became a monk and was placed under the supervision of a certain holy and spiritual teacher, with whom he remained for five years. At that point he went to visit the monasteries around Jerusalem and then Mount Sinai. He stayed there also for some years, living a life of intense worship and of service to the monks.

Al-Ghassani was so eager for their welfare that he used to go to Ayla§ to take care of the *kharaj*-tax¶ owed by the village of Qasr al-Tur,[59] as well as the *kharaj*-tax owed by the Christians of Pharan and Rhaithu.** On seeing his zeal, the monks appointed him as their *oikonomos*.†† For five years he persisted in this task.

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* Seemingly, the formal ritual of abjuration, entailing first the laying on of hands and anointing with oil and then the imprecation of anathemas against theological errors and a profession of faith.

† This is John IV, who held the patriarchal throne in 839–43.

‡ The famous Judean monastery of Mar Saba, founded in the late fifth century, located some twelve miles east of Bethlehem.

§ Modern-day Eilat, at the northern end of the Gulf of ʿAqaba.

¶ The *kharaj* was a tax levied on lands, as opposed to the *jizya*, which was a head tax.

** Pharan was a village located some twenty-five miles to the northwest of Sinai, while Rhaithu was on the coast, approximately twenty-five miles to the southwest of Sinai.

†† The *oikonomos* or steward was typically responsible for the management of church or monastery estates, the upkeep of property, and the management of funds.

After this, al-Ghassani conceived a desire to make his story public. He thus went to Ramla[60] in the company of two virtuous monks who had pledged themselves to him, to be with him and under his authority.

He wrote a letter that said: "I am Qays ibn Rabiʿ ibn Yazid al-Ghassani al-Najrani, and my story is such and such. I have become a Christian and a monk—out of my own desire and longing for Christianity. I am staying at the church. If you want me, look for me there."

This letter he threw into the Friday mosque in Ramla. Accompanied by the two monks, he then went and sat in the Lower Church of Saint Cyriacus.[61]

As for those in the mosque, after reading the letter they shouted out to one another, and a group of them went to the Lower Church. They went through the whole of it, inside and out, top to bottom—all the while, al-Ghassani was sitting there, with the two monks. They were unable to see him, however—as God had blinded their eyes to him.

He stood up and walked around in front of them. He tried to catch their eye but to no avail. They went to the Upper Church to look for him, only to return again to the Lower Church. They were unable to find him, however, even though they were standing right next to him—as God had blinded their eyes to him.

The two monks then said to him, "Father, God does not wish to make your situation known to them. If He had determined that you would suffer today, He would have let them know where you were. As this was not God's desire, you ought not resist His command."

He spent three days in Ramla. He then departed for Edessa and returned to the Mountain [of Sinai].[62]

On returning home, they found that the abbot of the monastery had died. The monks pleaded with him and importuned him, until they succeeded in making him abbot of the Mountain. Bearing the monastic name ʿAbd al-Masih (Servant of Christ), he served as abbot of Mount Sinai for the next seven years.

The administrator of the *kharaj*-tax began to act unjustly toward the Mountain. As their tax in those days went to Palestine, he and a group of monks departed for Ramla. On reaching a place called Ghadyan,* they happened on some troops of pilgrims returning from their hajj. As they walked among one of these troops, he was noticed by a man who was acquainted with him, one of his friends from the years he had spent participating in razzias.

The man grabbed hold of him and asked, "Aren't you Qays al-Ghassani?"

He answered, "I've no idea what you're talking about."

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* Modern-day Yotvata, near the southern end of the Wadi ʿAraba, some twenty-five miles north of Eilat/ʿAqaba.

The man began to shout and raise a fuss. At his clamor all the people of the troop assembled, and he addressed them, "This monk and I spent years together participating in razzias. He used to lead us in prayer. He is an Arab and used to be a friend of mine. He was once wounded on the upper part of his shoulder. Take a look. If you don't find it's as I say, then call me a liar."

They pulled off his cloak and his thobe and found the scar, just as the man had said. They then took ropes meant for the animals and bound him and tied him to the monks who had accompanied him. (There were three of them.)

That night, the monks loosed him from his bonds and begged him to flee, and said to him, "We'll stay with these people. Let them do with us what they will. We shall give our lives for you."

He replied, "It is more fitting that I give my life for you."

As they drew near to Ramla, that accursed man rode on ahead to the town. He gathered a crowd together and went in to see the governor, to tell him about the monk. The governor then dispatched him and a troop of horse, to meet them en route. They brought him to Ramla, into the presence of the governor.

The governor addressed him, "You should be ashamed of yourself. You're a man of honorable lineage and authority."

ʿAbd al-Masih replied, "It's more appropriate to feel shame before Christ my God than before you. Do with me as you will."

The governor summoned the witnesses against him, and a crowd of people testified as to matters of which they knew nothing. He then imprisoned him for three days.*[63] After that, he had him brought from the prison and offered him the opportunity to return to Islam—an offer that he refused. On hearing his answer, the governor was furious and ordered that he be beheaded—and the sentence was carried out.

The governor ordered that his remains be kept from the Christians and be burned. They were thus taken to an abandoned well in Baliʿa,† into which they were thrown, together with much wood, which was set alight and allowed to burn until ashes alone remained. Guards were also posted to prevent Christians from stealing his remains.

Nine months later, monks from Mount Sinai came and spoke to certain people in Ramla about secretly recovering[64] the remains. They were very frightened to do this, for fear of the ruler and because of the depth of the well, which was some thirty fathoms.‡ There were ten young men,

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* In traditional Islamic law, before execution could take place, an apostate was to be given time to repent. While the legal schools differ on the amount of time, some specify a period of three days.

† Baliʿa was a village near Lydda, just a few miles from Ramla.

‡ That is, "thirty *baʿ*," one *baʿ* being the distance between the fingertips of a man's outstretched arms. At approximately six feet to a *baʿ*, the well would have been some 180 feet in depth.

however, who were strong and willing to take the risk.

They got ready ropes and a large basket and went to the Lower Church, in which they passed the evening, waiting for people to fall asleep. Taking a candle and fire,* they went to the well, accompanied by the monks. They fixed a rope to one of the monks and to a basket and lowered both into the well—and he was carrying the fire and the candle in his hands. On reaching the bottom, he lit the candle and searched around in the ashes of the wood that they had thrown atop the saint. (Those ashes reached to his knees.)

He first noticed the skull, as it shone as white as snow. He then pulled the rest of the body out. In that the fire had not burned it or otherwise harmed it, he was filled with joy and amazement. He took and hid one of the forearms, as well as another bone. He put the rest in the basket and shouted for them to pull it up.

As soon as the remains had been raised to the surface, all those above tried to wrest them from one another and then raced off with them to the Lower Church.

Three men stayed behind to get the monk up out of the well. When they had done this, they went into the church of Saint Cyriacus, where they found the people contending with one another over the remains. As for the monk who had gone down into the well, he kept arguing with them[65] until he was permitted to keep the head. They also let him keep the forearm he had taken in the well.

They then buried him in the *diakonikon*†—excepting one of his forearms and one of his shanks, which they kept in their possession, so that they might bring them out for the people, that they might receive blessings from them.

As for the monks, they departed for the Mountain with his head and there celebrated a festival in his honor.

His martyrdom took place on the ninth of March—for which we give praise to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

C. Saint George and a Muslim

The Story of the Muslim Who Saw a Wondrous Vision in the Shrine of the Great Martyr George.

John, the bishop of the city of Monembasia, said that he was told the following story by the general Nicholas, who is also called Julianus.‡

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* Presumably, live coals would have been carried in a small box.

† The south annex, where ritual supplies were kept and preparations for the Eucharist were undertaken.

‡ As noted in the introduction to the chapter, Monembasia is a small peninsula located in the south-

One of the emirs of Syria sent his nephew to the city of Ramla, to administer its affairs and take care of certain matters of concern. Near this city was a small town called Lydda, where there was a large shrine, wondrous and old, dedicated to Saint George the Martyr.[66] When that Muslim, the nephew of the emir, saw it, he commanded his slaves to carry his assorted saddlebags and baggage into the portico of the aforementioned shrine.

After his slaves had carried out his command, he ascended to the upper galleries* and commanded them to bring his camels into the shrine. (There were ten of them.) He did this because he wanted to keep an eye on them while they were eating their fodder. The priests of the venerable shrine begged the Muslim not to do this detestable deed. With threats, however, he harshly rebuffed them. When the camels were brought into the shrine, all of them fell down and died. On seeing this, the Muslim was amazed. He grew terrified of the place and commanded that the camels be dragged out of the holy shrine.

The priest came to offer the bloodless sacrifice to the compassionate Lord God, He who abounds in mercy and compassion, and would open the eyes of the Muslim's mind by showing him a frightful sign—in the following manner: He saw a child who was seated on the [Table of] Preparation of the divine oblations. And then, as the priest began to pray and arrange the oblation, the Muslim saw him slaughter the child and drain his blood into the holy chalice, cut him into pieces, and place him on a splendid paten. The Muslim wondered at this greatly and was filled with anger and rage at the priest.

When the priest began the service of the divine liturgy and had reached the chanting of the Cherubic Hymn, the Muslim saw him take the sacred paten, which was full of the pieces of the dismembered child, as well as the cup that contained his divine blood. He transferred them from where he was standing to the holy Table, and then covered them with the sacred veil. When the people began to partake of the divine mysteries, he watched as the priest gave them the flesh and the blood of this child. Having observed these mysteries, the Muslim was perplexed and amazed.

After the priest had finished the divine service, he took some of the nicest loaves of the oblation† and presented them to the Muslim as a gift.

On seeing them, the Muslim said to the priest, "What are these things that you're giving me."

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east corner of the Peloponnese. It is possible, but far from certain, that this John lived in the early decades of the ninth century. As for Nicholas, he seems to be otherwise unattested.

* These galleries would presumably have opened onto the nave and allowed the Muslim to observe the liturgy.

† That is, the *prosphora*, bread that has been blessed but not consecrated.

The priest replied, "My lord, don't you know what these are? Weren't we standing right here in front of you—hiding no part of the Christian rites from you? It is from this that we offer an oblation to the Lord our God. And now, you ask what these are?"

The Muslim answered him angrily, "You dirty man, you filthy man, was it indeed from these loaves that you served the liturgy, as you now say? Or do you think I didn't just now see you slaughter a child, drain its blood into a cup, and then chop it into pieces, which you then arranged on a paten? And just now, when the people came to you, did you not feed them these pieces, placing in their mouths the flesh of this child soaked in its own blood? Do you deny this, you dirty man?"

When the priest had heard his account, he was filled with wonder and fear. He prostrated himself before the Muslim and said to him, "Blessed be our God, the Creator of heaven and earth, truly I myself was not worthy to see these mysteries you describe. Sir, as you have merited seeing this mystery, so frightful to mention, I trust in God that you are an exalted man, who is numbered among the righteous and counted with the victorious."

When the Muslim had heard his words, he was amazed and said, "What I've seen isn't the reality of the ritual, is it?"

The priest answered him, "Yes, my lord, this is the reality of the ritual. We believe and are certain that the oblation and the wine we offer are the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. To see them as they really are, however, in a manner such as they are known to the Lord, He who is destined to judge me—this is something of which I myself have not been deemed worthy. Sir, in that the most powerful Lord has deemed you worthy to see this mystery, I am convinced that you are a great man. This is because the great and virtuous fathers, the very stars of the Church and her teachers, men such as Basil, Gregory the Theologian, and the honorable John Chrysostom—men such as these, I say, saw this wondrous mystery, as they were worthy of it and merited it. And as for them, they were hierarchs of God, who had pleased Him through their service, while I am only a sinner. Before the Lord my God, I confess myself to be unworthy of seeing this exalted mystery. I saw before me just bread and wine."

When the Muslim heard his words, he was frightened and amazed, and he bowed his head and prayed for a great while. He then lifted his eyes and commanded his slaves to go outside. He then said to the priest, "Because of what I've seen, I know for certain that the faith of the Christians is magnificent and exalted. Woe to me, who passed all of my life in vanity, addicted to the religion of my fathers. Now then, since it is the will of God—most mighty and exalted—that I be saved, please baptize me, so that from this

time forward I may worship the Lord my God, with a clean consciousness and purity of intention."

When the priest heard his words, he answered him, "My lord, I wouldn't dare do this. You are a very important man, from a famous family. Your uncle is king of all this land of Syria. If I were to do this, he would kill us and destroy our churches. Still, if with all your heart you wish to do this, then without informing your companions, go to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and he will baptize you."

When the priest had finished telling him this, the Muslim left him.

The Muslim put on clothing made from hair, and arising in the middle of the night he fled, without his slaves knowing what he was doing. He then went to the Patriarch of Jerusalem. He fell to his knees and bowed down in front of him and asked whether he might receive the holy baptism from him. His desire was fulfilled.

Eight days later, he said to the patriarch, "My holy lord, behold, by the grace of God I have become a Christian. Will you please tell me what I should do, to save my wretched soul?"

The patriarch replied, "If you wish to be saved, go to Mount Sinai. There you will find a monastery. In it there are devout monks who worship God constantly. Take up residence with them. Wear their clothes. If you do so, you'll not be separated from the lot of the saved."

When he had heard his words, he went to Mount Sinai and became a monk, putting on the holy monastic garb. After spending three years there, he had learned the psalms. At the end of this period of three years, he asked the abbot of the monastery to send him to the priest of the shrine of the holy Saint George. He agreed and sent him.

When he arrived at the shrine of the venerable martyr and had prayed in it, he prostrated himself before that holy priest and said to him, "You whom I regard as the dearest of men, do you know who I am?"

The priest answered, "How can I know someone I've never seen before?"

The monk replied to him, "Surely, you do know me. Am I not that Muslim, the son of the emir's sister, the one who stayed in the galleries of this shrine and saw a wondrous and frightful vision? Behold, by the grace of God and through your prayers, which he accepted from you, I've become a Christian and a monk. There is another desire that I have, however, and because of it I've come to you. For the sake of the Lord, do not fail to fulfill it for me."

After hearing him say this, the priest gave glory to the Lord—marveling to see that he who formerly was a foreign wolf had become a lamb of Christ, humble and pious—and said to him, "My lord, what is it you desire?"

"I wish to see Jesus Christ, our Lord," he answered.

He then said to him, "As you longingly desire to see our God Jesus Christ, go to the king of Syria, your uncle. Before him and before all the Muslims with him, confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord of all creation and its Creator, king from all eternity, who shares His rule with the Father and the divine Spirit; and that in the last days, He became flesh for the sake of our salvation, of the Holy Spirit and of the holy and ever-virgin Mary; and that while in the world, He performed miracles both amazing and frightful, which surpass all manner of logical proof in their exalted nature; and that He was crucified and was buried, and rose again after three days and ascended into heaven, and will come again, in praise, glory, and honor. As for you, then you will boldly look on Him."

Convinced of the truth of the priest's words, the monk journeyed to where his uncle was. In the middle of the night, he climbed the minaret and began to shout in their own language, "Come here, Muslims. There's something I want to say to you."

As it was night and it was quiet, his voice carried to each one of the surrounding neighborhoods. When the Muslims there heard him, they woke up and went to the minaret to find out who was shouting. When they reached it, they found the monk and asked him why he was shouting.

He replied, "What reward will you give me, to tell you the whereabouts of the emir's nephew, the one who fled and is now missing, whom no one can find?"

They answered him, "If you do this fine deed and tell us where that famous and excellent man is, and we find him through your information, we'll give you gold and silver beyond what you can imagine."

The monk then said to them, "Take me to the emir, and I'll tell him where his nephew is, and then he may do what he thinks best."

After hearing what he had to say, they took him to his uncle. Full of happiness, they said to the emir, "This monk that we've brought to your honorable self—he knows where your nephew is."

The emir asked the monk in his own tongue whether he really knew the location of his nephew.

The monk answered, "Yes, I know what's become of him. And this is because, in truth, I am he. I have become a Christian and now possess a pure faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, an eternally unique divine nature. I also confess that one person of the Trinity, our Lord and our God Jesus Christ, became incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the holy Virgin Mary, and that He performed in this world beautiful, frightful, and precious miracles, and that He was crucified and on the third day rose from the dead, and that He ascended gloriously to heaven, whence he will come again to judge all the living and the dead."

On hearing this, the emir was shocked and said to him, "You most unfortunate man, what's happened to you, that you should so forget yourself and the abundant wealth you used to have, and in this way reduce yourself to being a pauper, wandering here and there, wearing these coarse and fetid clothes. Why don't you return to our excellent religion and again acknowledge the glory of the trustworthy prophet Muhammad,[67] who conferred so many good things on us and on all Muslims?"

To this the monk replied, "All that I had as a Muslim was allotted and apportioned to me by Satan the deceiver. As for these clothes you now see me wearing, they are to my glory and increase me in honor—and I believe them to be a foretaste of my future glory."

As it was a question of one who was his nephew, on hearing this, the emir had mercy on him and showed him pity, and he said to those in attendance, "This man is quite mad. He hasn't any idea what he's saying. Take him outside the city and chase him away."

As for his ministers, together with the judges, the jurists, and the teachers who were sitting there, their response was to say, "He has let off a man who has humiliated our religion and contrived lies against our way of life. It is our judgment that he merits death. For he has made it permissible henceforth for all of us, too, to become Christians, and—as quick as you please—reject the religion of our fathers."

When the emir saw that they were opposed to him, he feared that they would revolt against him, as was their wont. So he thus told them to do with the monk as they wished.

With the gnashing of teeth, to a man they arose and came at the monk. They seized him and took him outside the city, where they stoned him—as he loudly acclaimed the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. He passed from this life confessing the truth and then departed to be with the Lord, for whom he so boldly yearned.

The pile of stones remained there for quite some time. Every night a star appeared above it. It was bright enough to light up the entire district. The Muslims also saw it and were filled with wonder.

When some time had passed, the emir ordered the Christians to remove the blessed man out from under the stones and to bury him. As they were carrying out this command, they discovered that the monk's body was intact, with no trace of corruption, and that it smelled strongly of fine perfume.

They prostrated themselves before his remains and performed the funeral rites, to the accompaniment of hymns and psalms. They then buried him where such a one should be buried. And as they did so, they were praising our Lord Jesus Christ and glorifying Him for performing such great miracles, to whom be all glory, honor, worship, and exaltation, together

with the everlasting Father and the life-giving and all-holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen. Amen.

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Chapter 5

Agapius of Manbij

محبوب المنبجي

John C. Lamoreaux

The Arab Orthodox produced a number of important historians. Their works are counted among the most valuable remains of Arab Christian literature. They provide important glimpses into matters seldom discussed in the often more voluminous historical works compiled by their contemporaries: whether Muslims, who were little concerned with the affairs of Christians, or the Orthodox Christians living in Byzantium, who seldom had access to information about events across the border. Given their importance, the works of these historians were among the first Arab Christian texts to be edited, published, and studied in Europe. In a similar fashion, even today, whereas most Arab Christian authors remain largely unknown to nonspecialists, Arab Orthodox historians are widely read whenever translations are available.

Three large historical works have survived from the earliest centuries of Orthodox life under Muslim rule. The first was written by Saʿid ibn Batriq (d. May 11, 940).[1] He was born in Egypt in 876, near modern-day Cairo, and was a physician by training. Elevated to the patriarchal throne of Alexandria on January 22, 935, he received the name Eutychius. His chronicle is a history of the world from Adam to 938. In addition to being an important source for the history of the three Arab Orthodox patriarchates, Eutychius's work was also characterized by a popular style of writing and a penchant for good stories—characteristics that made it popular with later readers. Eutychius's work was continued by another Orthodox author, possibly a relative of Eutychius, Yahya ibn Saʿid, whose sequel to Eutychius's history brought its narrative forward from 938 to 1033.[2] The author was a physician who lived in Alexandria until 1015, when persecution under the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim forced him to flee to Antioch, which was then under Byzan-

tine control. There he lived until his death ca. 1066. Yahya's supplement is a valuable source for the political, social, and religious history of the eastern Mediterranean—not just Egypt and Syria but also places further afield, such as Bulgaria and Kiev.

At roughly the same time that Eutychius was writing his chronicle in Egypt, another historian was at work in Syria: Agapius, the son of Constantine, otherwise known as Mahbub, the metropolitan of Manbij in northern Syria.* His world history began with the Creation. As the end of the work has been lost, it is not known for certain how far he meant to carry it forward, but he probably intended to cover events until his own day, perhaps to shortly after 942. The selections translated below are taken from Agapius's Chronicle. In them he discusses the history of Biblical translation and the differences between the Hebrew and the Greek Old Testaments. He further argues that Christians should not use versions of the Bible translated from the Hebrew, as they were deliberately corrupted by Jews at the time of Christ, to justify their rejection of Him. As we shall see below, Agapius is particularly concerned with Syriac-speaking Christians, whose version of the Old Testament was translated directly from the Hebrew.

Agapius's city of Manbij was the metropolitan seat of inland Syria.[3] Located on the main highway leading east from Aleppo, on the western shore of the Euphrates, Manbij was a strategically important border town. It guarded a key crossing[4] and was a scene of frequent conflict. The city hosted a military garrison, and at certain times of the year brigades of Muslim volunteers would come to the border to participate in the annual raids on Byzantine territory. The countryside round about was often wild, a haunt for various nomadic tribes, some of which also had permanent encampments outside the city. Such Arab tribesmen mingled with the settled folk of the city and with the Arabs and Muslims living there. The religious life of the city was as diverse as its population and included Muslims, Greek, Syriac, and Arabic-speaking Chalcedonians, Armenian-speaking Miaphysites, Syriac-speaking Miaphysites and Nestorians, as well as small communities of Jews and Persians.

We know little about Agapius himself. Our main source of information for his life are the titles and colophons† of his Chronicle, his only surviving work. These sometimes call him Mahbub, the son of Constantine, and sometimes Agapius, the son of Constantine (Agapius being a Greek

* This town is also known as Hierapolis in Greek and as Mabbug in Syriac.

† Colophons are copyists' notes in manuscripts that often contain valuable historical information about the copyists themselves, the time, place, and circumstances of the copying, and sometimes about the author and the origin of the copied work.

translation of Mahbub).* They named him al-Rumi or "the Byzantine," suggesting perhaps that he was a native Greek. They sometimes added that he was al-Manbiji, that is, from the city of Manbij. They once refer to him as the bishop of Manbij. To judge from Agapius's Chronicle, he was versed in Greek and Arabic, and perhaps also Syriac. We do not know when he was born or when he died, only that he flourished in the mid-tenth century, as he states that he was at work on his Chronicle in the year 942. This date is confirmed by the Muslim historian al-Masʿudi, who mentions Agapius's Chronicle in a work written in 956.[5]

Agapius's Chronicle is today most commonly called the *Kitab al-ʿUnwan* (Book of the Title), an abridged version of the title found in the printed editions: "Book of the Title, Which is Ornamented [*al-mukallal]* by the Eminent Qualities of Wisdom, Crowned by the Different Types of Philosophy, and Illustrated by the Truths of Science." The title of the printed editions is certainly corrupt. It attributes typically human virtues to a book, where one would expect a personal name. "Title" also makes little sense as the name of a book. Other, older manuscripts[6] offer a different version of the text's title: "*Kitab al-Ta'rikh* or Book of History, written by Mahbub the son of Constantine al-Rumi al-Manbiji, which he addressed [*khatabahu*] to the Man Who is Ornamented [*li-l-mukallal*] by the Eminent Qualities of Wisdom, Crowned by the Different Types of Philosophy, and Praised for the Truths of Understanding, the Pure, the Good, Abu Musa ʿIsa ibn al-Husayn." As for this Abu Musa, he appears to be otherwise unattested. His name suggests that he may be a Muslim. The character of the invocations in Agapius's preface suggests further that this ʿIsa was Agapius's social superior and a secular authority.

Agapius's work is not a history of the world per se but only of those regions that could be known to a writer of the early medieval Near East. As is the case with other, similar works, Agapius's begins with an outline formed by the succession of generations of the Bible. Biblical genealogies provide a historical outline until the fourth century BC, and the time of Alexander the Great, after which the reigns of the Hellenistic kings take precedence. With Augustus and the arrival of Rome in the East, the emperors come to the fore: first, those of the united Roman Empire, then those of the eastern Roman Empire alone. Living on the eastern edge of what had once been the Roman Empire, Agapius interweaves the succession of Roman and Byzantine rulers with those of Persia and later those of the Muslim Umayyad and ʿAbbasid empires. Within this chronological outline Agapius includes stories and other sorts of lore. Famous figures and events from the Bible and

* Both the Greek name Agapius and the Arabic name Mahbub mean "beloved."

classical literature are treated in their proper places. Major milestones in the history of technology, philosophy, and religion are described at the time they are believed to have occurred. Agapius is little concerned with questions of historicity. Folklore and good stories are often treated at greater length than the more mundane material. Occasionally, "atemporal" materials are included at appropriate junctures: a description of the various climes of the world, an overview of the classification of the sciences, apologetic or polemical theological discourses, and so on.

All this is quite typical of the genre. Agapius's Chronicle is, however, quite unusual in another way. Buried in his text is a peculiar theological argument. He is convinced that some of his fellow Christians have gone astray. Syriac-speaking Christians have erroneously based their translations of the Old Testament not on the Greek Old Testament (the so-called "Translation of the Seventy," or Septuagint) but on the Hebrew text preserved among Jews. Agapius is convinced that the Jews have willfully corrupted their Hebrew text in order to subvert the claims of Christianity. This happened, he believes, in the age of the Apostles. When confronted by the claims of early believers in Christ, the Jewish high priests determined that the best refutation of those claims would be to prove that Jesus of Nazareth could not be the Messiah, in that the time of the Messiah had not yet come. They accomplished this, according to Agapius, by tampering with the dates of the Bible so as to make the world appear younger than it actually was. In effect, Agapius accuses the Jews of having erased over a thousand years from world history.

Agapius's argument turns on a number of themes, treated over and over again throughout his Chronicle. When he reaches the life of Abraham, however, he expands upon these themes at greater length, in a long and largely self-standing treatise on chronological problems. His argument starts with the differences between the dates for the Biblical patriarchs given in the Greek and Hebrew versions of Genesis—a problem that continues to puzzle scholars even today—and with how these differences affect the calculation of the world age. For instance, to calculate how many years had passed from Creation by the time of Mahalalel's birth (Gen. 5:12), in the fifth generation from Adam, Agapius analyzes the text of Genesis as follows:

> Our father Adam (may God have mercy on him) died in the fifth generation from his own birth, that is, 135 years after the birth of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam. He was 930 years old. After fathering Seth, he lived another 700 years. An explanation

> of how to calculate this from the Septuagint* is as follows. It is recorded that Adam was 230 years old when he fathered Seth. Seth was 205 when he fathered Enosh. That makes 435 years. Enosh was 190 years old when he fathered Cainan. That makes 625 years. Cainan was 170 years old when he fathered Mahalalel. That makes 795 years. It was after the birth of Mahalalel that Adam reached the end of his 930 years, that is, the total span of his life.

According to Agapius, when the Jews decided to corrupt the Scripture, they did so as deviously as possible, for fear that their work would be noticed. To accomplish this they simply decreased the age at which children were first fathered, while keeping the total life span of each patriarch the same.

> They thus wrote that Adam was 130 [instead of 230] years old when he fathered Seth. Seth was 105 [instead of 205] when he fathered Enosh. Enosh was 90 [instead of 190] when he fathered Cainan. Cainan was 70 [instead of 170] when he fathered Mahalalel. Mahalalel was 65 [instead of 165] when he fathered Jared. Jared was 162† when he fathered Enoch. Enoch was 65 [instead of 165] when he fathered Methuselah. Methuselah was 187‡ when he fathered Lamech. To complete the calculation in the manner we have described, a total of 874 years would have passed when one reaches the time of Lamech's birth. In that Adam lived to be 930 years of age, he would have died 56 years after the birth of Lamech, which is to say, in the ninth generation from his own birth, which would make Adam's life coincide with the beginning of the Flood.

Thus, whereas the Greek Old Testament—the Septuagint—assigned the birth of Mahalalel to the year 795 from Creation, the Hebrew text assigns it to the year 395 from Creation. Likewise, the Greek has Adam die when Mahalalel was 135 years old, and thus in the fifth generation, while the Hebrew has him die when Lamech was 56 and thus in the ninth generation from Adam. According to Agapius, such corruption affects the Hebrew version of Genesis from its beginning all the way to Abraham's birth, with the net result that 1,389 years are removed from the history of the world.

To take another example, whereas the Greek version of Genesis mentions two Cainans—one fathered by Enosh (Gen. 5:10), the other by Arpachshad, the son of Shem (Gen. 10:24, 11:12–13 LXX)—the Hebrew Genesis knows

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* That is, the Greek text of the Old Testament, which Agapius considers to have the correct chronology.

† In this date there is no discrepancy between the Greek and the Hebrew texts.

‡ Again, in this date there is no discrepancy between the Greek and the Hebrew texts.

only the first. Once again, Agapius sees in this textual variant a deliberate attempt to undermine the foundations of Christianity. He explains the omission as follows:

> On finding that the name of this second Cainan, the descendant of Noah, was the same as Cainan the son of Enosh the son of Seth the son of Adam, they deleted it from the Torah. They also deleted his years along with all the other years they deleted. It was their intention that their compatriots should imagine that they were still living in the middle of the world age. They also wished to falsify the words of the blessed Paul, who had spoken of "we to whom the end of time has come" (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11). So too, they wished to falsify the words of the later disciples of our Christ, should they say that Christ came at the end of the age—as then they would be able to dispute the matter with them, by claiming that the time of Christ had not yet arrived and will not arrive until the end of time.

Agapius goes on to respond to a hypothetical defense. If the Jews admit that the second Cainan has been omitted but try to justify the omission on the grounds that this Cainan was the inventor of idolatry, one should respond: "Fine, you deleted his name. Where, then, are his years? Where did you put them?" Agapius closes his discussion of this topic by observing that the second Cainan is known from other witnesses, including the Gospel of Luke (Luke 3:36), as well as the Hebrew version of the Torah preserved by the Samaritans.

Matters such as these exercise a great deal of Agapius's attention in his retelling of patriarchal history in the opening portions of his Chronicle. In a similar manner, in the remainder of his Chronicle, Agapius returns again and again to the problem of determining how long kings lived, dynasties lasted, and the like. Perhaps the most difficult problem for him is to determine the duration of the Babylonian exile, as in this instance he has to find a way to reconcile the details of the Bible's historical narrative with the testimony of the prophets. Still, he has no other option, and it is only through an analysis of the genealogies and generations that he is able to establish the total number of years that each period contributes to the world age. This in turn provides the basis for his further arguments that the life of the historical Christ fulfilled the predictions of the prophets.

Agapius weaves together his various reflections on chronology and prophecy with his more mundane task of narrating the history of the world. The theme of the Jewish corruption of the Scripture is always present, though, and he returns to it repeatedly. It is in the long digression mentioned above,

however, that Agapius discusses the theme at greatest length. Here one finds the fullest explanation of the reasons that led the Jews to corrupt the Scripture and of how this corruption could have been disseminated to all surviving copies of the Hebrew text. This is combined with a curious pastiche of historical accounts explaining when and how this Jewish perfidy was first discovered. The whole of this self-standing digression is translated below.

Agapius combines a number of independent stories to make his case. Of these, the most important to his argument are a peculiar account of the origins of the Greek version of the Bible (the Septuagint) in the time of the Egyptian king Ptolemy II Philadelphus (r. 283–246 BC);[7] the legend of Helen (emperor Constantine's mother) and her journey to Jerusalem in search of the True Cross; an account of how Constantine the Great first discovered that the Hebrew version had been subject to corruption; a lengthy theological and exegetical discourse on the interpretation of Daniel and the duration of the Babylonian Exile; and a debate at Constantine's court between certain bishops and certain Jews as to whether Christ fulfills Biblical prophecy, in particular, whether His advent occurred in the sixth millennium of world history and whether it took place precisely "seven weeks and two and sixty weeks" after the Babylonian Exile, as required by Daniel's Messianic vision (Dan. 9).

While a superficial reading of Agapius's text might give the impression that his arguments are primarily concerned with refuting the Jews, in point of fact he is addressing himself primarily to his fellow Christians. If the Hebrew text is corrupt, translations from the Hebrew are corrupt as well. The most popular version of the Bible for Syriac-speaking Christians is the Peshitta, and in fact the Old Testament of the Peshitta was translated not from the Septuagint but from Hebrew. As Agapius observes elsewhere:

> Even until the present day, this corrupt version is to be found in the hands of the greater part of those Christians who employ the Syriac version, who are not even aware of the authentic Torah [, the Septuagint], that which the Seventy translated.

As in the above passage, the tenor of his treatment elsewhere suggests that the Greek version of the Old Testament was both little known and little relevant to the majority of Christians in the region of Manbij. Indeed, as if he were the sole Hellene settled on this distant border of the caliphate, he can offhandedly observe that it is not the Greek Bible but the Syriac "that all the Christians read in the churches."

Agapius's arguments are as relevant to Syriac-speaking Orthodox Christians (Chalcedonians) as they are to non-Chalcedonians. Given the diversity

of Manbij and northern Syria, and that matters of Christology do not figure in his discussion, Agapius was probably addressing both. Whatever the case, his objective is the same: to convince his Syriac-speaking brethren to do nothing less than abandon their Scripture, which "was translated from Hebrew, at some time after Christianity appeared, and thus after the corruption had been introduced," in favor of one made from the Septuagint and thus free from Jewish corruption.

Agapius's long digression gives every indication of having once been an independent treatise or perhaps part of one. And indeed, Agapius himself suggests as much in the conclusion to this part of his work:

> Now then, we have translated and analyzed the account of what was translated by the Seventy * and of why King Constantine examined the cause of the differences found in the Scriptures. I shall now return to where we left off, in the days of Abraham, to the point we had reached before beginning this last account.

Other aspects of the digression also suggest that Agapius is abridging an independent text. There are few cross-references in it to other parts of the Chronicle. The story is self-contained. Parts of the text give the impression of having been rather carelessly summarized. One may note, especially, the sections on Alexander the Great and the disruptions to the debate at Constantine's court. Such textual problems cannot be easily attributed to scribal error. The evidence thus suggests that this section—which we may call the "Septuagint Complex"—was not of Agapius's own creation but came from some other, older work that he was abridging and translating.

Agapius's Chronicle as a whole is preserved in two basic forms, both incomplete. One set of manuscripts transmits the first part of the Chronicle (covering events from Creation to the time of Christ's birth). In this set the three oldest manuscripts are: Sinai ar. 580 (13th century),[8] Sinai ar. 456 (13th century), and Oxford, Bodleian, Hunt. 478 (1320 CE). Other, more recent copies are known, though they have never, to my knowledge, been systematically examined.[9] Sinai ar. 580 and the Oxford manuscript have texts that are almost identical. This recension of the text has numerous passages difficult or impossible to construe, only some of which are likely a result of scribal error. Sinai ar. 456 offers a slightly different recension of the text.[10] In general, it offers a simpler, less rhetorical, and overall more readable version. It occasionally omits small sections of the text: often, detailed discussions of names and dates. Otherwise, when the two recensions do

* That is, of the Septuagint.

differ, it is at the level of word and phrase. The differences between the two recensions are unlikely to have arisen through simple scribal error. At present, and until the whole of the manuscript tradition has been examined, it remains unclear how these two recensions are related to one another. As for the second half of Agapius's Chronicle, it survives in just one manuscript: Florence, Laurenziana, or. 323 (1288 CE). The manuscript is incomplete at the end, breaking off in mid-sentence. The surviving portion begins with Christ's life and ends with the reign of the Caliph al-Mahdi (775–85). At some point, the manuscript was heavily damaged by water, so that the text was at one time difficult to read and a number of pages had become fused. A recent restoration has greatly improved its readability.[11]

Toward the beginning of the last century, and working independently of one another, Alexandre Vasiliev and Louis Cheikho simultaneously prepared editions of Agapius's Chronicle. Vasiliev began work on his edition in 1902, during a visit to Mount Sinai. There he was able to copy by hand both Sinai manuscripts. In the following year he transcribed the Florence manuscript. Five years later, he was able to consult the Oxford manuscript and procure photographs of it. Vasiliev's edition, with French translation, was published in the *Patrologia Orientalis* series, under the title *Kitab al-ʿUnvan: Histoire universelle, écrite par Agapios (Mahboub) de Menbidj*.[12] For the first half of the Chronicle, Vasiliev adopted the text of the Oxford manuscript, in that it was well written and well preserved, perhaps also because he had photographs of it. In an apparatus Vasiliev cited occasional variants from the two Sinai manuscripts, with special attention paid to the orthography of proper names. Vasiliev's presentation of variants is fairly thorough for Sinai ar. 580, whose text was nearly identical to the Oxford manuscript. He made far less use of Sinai ar. 456, which he thought to be a bowdlerized version of the text. In editing the second half of the Chronicle, Vasiliev rather apologetically made the best use he could of his transcription of the Florence manuscript, which had then not yet been restored. When Vasiliev's text was problematic or even impossible to construe, he refrained from conjectural emendations and instead tended to translate less literally.[13]

As Vasiliev was visiting Oxford, Cheikho was finishing his own edition. By 1907 he had prepared the text for publication and seen it through typesetting. Circumstances intervened to prevent publication until 1912, when it was published in the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* series, under the title *Agapius Episcopus Mabbugensis, Historia Universalis*.[14] Cheikho based his edition on the same base manuscripts as Vasiliev: the Oxford and Florence manuscripts. In addition, he consulted two late manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Orientale in Beirut. From them he offered

occasional variants. After the type had been set, Cheikho gained access to another copy of the text, a late manuscript from Sharfeh (Lebanon). Rather than rework the finished edition, Cheikho included some of the new manuscript's variants in an appendix. In a second appendix he offered a number of improvements to his edition—in some cases, the correction of misprints, in other cases, conjectural emendations. In a final appendix he cites a number of parallels from other, later chronicles that had made use of Agapius. Cheikho's edition is more polished than Vasiliev's. He often indicates vowels and marks doubled consonants, especially when the text is difficult for the modern reader. Above all, he seeks to present his readers with a text that is intelligible. Accordingly, he frequently corrects and emends the text, both when he regards it to be in error and when he considers its Arabic to be unclear or vulgar. Cheikho's departures from his base manuscripts are sometimes noted in his apparatus; more often they are tacit. Consequently, without actually consulting all of his manuscripts, it is sometimes impossible for the modern reader to know when the text is based on manuscript witnesses and when it is based on Cheikho's refined sense of what his author was most likely to have written.[15]

Thus, no critical edition of Agapius's Chronicle yet exists. Each of the two printed versions has its virtues and its faults. In want of a better alternative, the present translation is based on a preliminary, ad hoc edition of the relevant section. The main witnesses available were: the two Sinai manuscripts, the Oxford manuscript (not directly, but through the consensus of the two printed editions), variants from the two Beirut manuscripts cited by Cheikho, and variants from the Sharfeh manuscript collated by Cheikho. These witnesses offer two clear recensions of the text: (A) Sinai ar. 456, whose readings are occasionally supported by the Beirut and Sharfeh manuscripts; (B) Sinai ar. 580 and the Oxford manuscript, with some support from the Beirut and Sharfeh manuscripts. Parts of the text are nearly identical in A and B, apart from typical scribal errors. In such cases, minor differences between the recensions were resolved as seemed best in each case. The resulting, mixed text is translated. Interspersed among such passages are others where A and B diverge to such an extent that the text requires to be set in parallel columns. In such cases, due to the number of textual difficulties in B, the translation follows A, occasionally corrected with the testimony of B. Recension A occasionally omits short passages—sometimes through carelessness but sometimes deliberately, seemingly because of their technical nature. The translation restores the omitted passages, which are translated from B. All subtitles in the translation below are supplied by the translator.

Translation

Corruptions and omissions are to be found in the Torah only as far as the date of the birth of Abraham. This was because the matters there described were distant in time and the majority of people knew nothing of them. The Jewish high priests omitted these years [from the Torah] in the days of Christ and after His ascension to heaven, when the Jewish high priests, Annas and Caiaphas,[16] wished to give the lie to Christ's mission and falsify the time of His advent. This happened because they were frightened by a group of leading men from among the notables and the dignitaries, among whom Christ had manifested miracles and signs and who had seen His resurrection, even as it is recorded in the holy Gospel. These people thus disputed with the high priests, and an argument broke out between them. The Jewish high priests, Annas and Caiaphas, argued against them that the Christ who is prophesied would come only in the last days, "whereas we," they claimed, "are still in the middle of the world age."

Thereupon, the high priests withdrew themselves from their [opponents], taking with them the Scriptural archives. They then set themselves to remove a total of 1,389 years, from the time of Adam and the Creation to the time of Terah's fathering of Abraham. They restricted their changes to the period from Adam to Abraham because such matters had happened long ago and the majority of people knew nothing of them, as we just said. When, [working] privately, they had secretly brought this task to careful completion, they showed it to their compatriots and to all those who concurred with them in their desire to crucify Christ. They then made many copies of the Torah, which they secretly gave to their confidants, so that they might read them publicly and thereby repulse the opponents of the high priests. The high priests also concealed from their compatriots the [Greek] translation of the Torah that had been made by the Seventy,* along with the books of the prophets that the [Seventy] had translated for King Ptolemy.† Whenever it was possible to do so, they also changed all the prophecies concerning Christ found in the books of the prophets. Regarding all such passages that they changed and corrupted, the text of the Seventy is to be taken as correct and permitted to serve as confirmation of the mission of our Lord Christ. This is because the Jews corrupted the Torah after the resurrection of Christ, whereas the translation of the Seventy was made some 300 years before Christ's advent.

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* That is, the Septuagint.

† Ptolemy II Philadelphus (r. 283–246 BC).

The Story of Ptolemy's Eager Desire to Translate the Scriptures

God willing, we shall now explain the subject, employing an orderly manner of exposition all the way to its conclusion. We begin with the story of King Alexander, that is, Dhu al-Qarnayn,* and how he divided his realm between four of "his slaves"—or rather, his boon companions, whom Scripture calls "his slaves."[17] One of his companions was Ptolemy Philadelphus, the king of Alexandria.† As we just said, it was for him that the Seventy Jewish sages translated the Torah and all the books of the prophets, from Hebrew into Greek. No one should think that including an account [of this] early on in the present book is chronologically inappropriate. Quite the contrary, it is absolutely necessary to include it early, as the omission of years and the corruption in the Torah is found only as far as the days of Terah and the birth of Abraham. Thus, we must clearly explain what it was that induced Ptolemy Philadelphus so eagerly to ask for a translation of the Scriptures. Further, we want the learned [readers] to understand how the Jewish priests Annas and Caiaphas dared to give orders that the Scriptures be corrupted and omissions be made, so that we might then clarify for the intelligent, the learned, and the studious, how their [fraud] came to be exposed and how, upon investigation, the passages in question bore testimony to themselves about what had been corrupted and omitted.

It is recorded that one of the mighty Persians, a man named Darius,‡ fought with Alexander for control of the throne—in Egypt, for a period of six years. Alexander gained the upper hand and defeated and killed Darius. Dominion was then his alone.[18] After that, Alexander gathered a great many soldiers together and went forth with them to other lands, to do battle with their kings and conquer their territory, until eventually he reached Sind,§ which he seized and over which he assumed control. Thereafter, he made ready to do battle with the king of furthest China (Sin). Prior to this Alexander had divided his realm and distributed it among four of his closest relatives, as I said above. He proceeded to do battle with the kings of the entire world, until the time of his death. When news of his death reached his four comrades, each of them seized control of the territory to which he had been appointed.[19] Ptolemy Lagides[20] seized Egypt, which was his province, and ruled over it for forty years. Philip ruled Macedonia. Antigonus and Demetrius ruled over Syria

* "Dhu al-Qarnayn" ("the possessor of two horns") is the Qurʾanic term for Alexander the Great.

† Agapius confuses Ptolemy II Philadelphus with his father, Ptolemy I Soter (also known as Ptolemy Lagides). In reality, it is Ptolemy I Soter who was a "companion" of Alexander the Great and a general under him. After Alexander's death he became the founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt.

‡ The Persian king Darius III (r. 336–330 BC).

§ Roughly equivalent to modern Pakistan.

and the lands of Asia Minor. Seleucus ruled over the lands of the East.[21]

Seleucus went to Egypt in that year[22] (the thirteenth year of Ptolemy Lagides).[23] He conquered Syria after that[24] and then pursued Demetrius to Asia Minor, where he defeated and killed him.[25] It is thus that he took possession of Asia Minor, together with Syria and Babylon. These he ruled for thirty-two years. It was then that Seleucus conceived the desire to make a memorial for King Alexander, so that memory of him might be preserved even now that he was dead. He did this as a way of recompensing Alexander for the good he had received from him. It is thus that he established a calendar with years reckoned in Alexander's name. He fixed its beginning on the first day of his reign in Syria, that is, the thirteenth year of his reign.* The total number of years in the history of the world, from the beginning of Creation and Adam to that year (that is, the first year of the reign of Dhu al-Qarnayn)† amounted to 5,197 years.[26] We shall explicate this topic later, God willing.

In those days, Ptolemy was king—and as we just noted, it was for him that the Scriptures were translated [into Greek]. He ruled over Egypt for thirty-eight years. He freed all the foreign captives in his realm: 130,000 of them, of whom 30,000 were Jews.‡ With regard to the translation of the Scriptures, the story commences as follows.

It is recorded that one of the mighty western[27] kings, Ptolemy Philadelphus by name (that is, the man here being discussed), was like Alexander in might and power, and full of wisdom, knowledge, and philosophy. He was entirely devoted to wisdom, and to the reading of books, and to all the sciences, which he gathered from every land, so as to have all of them in full (that is, the sciences that we have described, such as alchemy, astrology, geometry, logic, and the others we mentioned in our account). He collected these sciences and deposited them in a library§[28] devoted solely to them and there exposited their mysteries. He also gave thought to how he might be fondly remembered after his death. He gathered together the foreigners of all nations who were held captive in his realm. He counted them and found that there were 130,000 of them, of whom 30,000 were Jews. The king allowed them all to return to their lands. On hearing the news, the Jews rejoiced greatly. They were very pleased with him, and they blessed him and thanked him profusely.

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* This is the Seleucid era that marks the founding of the Seleucid Empire (a Hellenistic empire that included much of the Middle East) after the death of Alexander the Great. The first year of the Seleucid era is 312/311 BC. Dating according to the Seleucid era was widespread in the Middle East and continued among certain communities throughout the medieval period and up to modern times.

† Properly speaking, it is a question of the first year of the Seleucid calendar, not Alexander.

‡ Captives taken by Ptolemy I Soter, when in 320 BC he captured Jerusalem.

§ Agapius is referring to the famous Library of Alexandria.

On the Reason for the Seventy's Translation of the Old Testament

Ptolemy then said to them, "I shall do this favor for you, but there is something I need from you, whereby your thanks will be made perfect."

They asked, "What is it, your majesty?"

He replied, "I need you to send me the books of wisdom found in your land. You can send them via messengers, who will travel with you."

They were well disposed to do this and swore an oath to accomplish it.

The Jews then said to him, "Your majesty, in our land we have certain unique books in Hebrew. No other nation has any like them. They are books of revelation, sent down from heaven to our prophets, concerning ordinances, laws, and commandments, both positive and negative, as well as what is and what will happen in the future."[29]

Ptolemy was amazed and generously supplied them with provisions for their return journey. He put them in the charge of his messengers, to take them back to their land and their leaders. Through them he also sent gifts and garments for their leaders and their governor. He wrote letters to them, regarding his need for a copy of the Scriptures. When news of this reached the leaders and the governor [of the Jews], they were filled with joy and went forth to meet the returning Jewish [captives]. They encountered their compatriots at the most distant border of their land. After reading King Ptolemy's letters, the leaders and governor made haste to fulfill his request. They collected the books of the Torah and the prophets. These they sent to him, via his messengers. All of them were in Hebrew and were written in gold.[30] They also sent via the messengers an answer to his letters.

When these Hebrew books reached Ptolemy, he marveled at them but was unable to understand anything in them. He therefore sent his messengers back to them, with a letter explaining the problem and asking them to send some learned men to translate the books into his own language. He promised to give them gifts in return, whatever they might desire. Ptolemy's letter arrived in Jerusalem, and on reading it they quickly got ready to travel to him—out of a desire for his gifts. They began to argue with one another over the matter and resolved to send six men from each one of their tribes, for a total of seventy-two men. Those men then went to him.

When they arrived, King Ptolemy received them favorably and hospitably. He divided them into thirty-six teams, in such a way that each team was composed of men drawn from different tribes. He appointed for each team a man whose job it was to prevent them from having contact with one another and to see to their welfare, as well as to transfer the books from

one team to another when a translation was finished.* Eventually, Ptolemy had [a translation of] the entire Torah and all the books of the prophets, in thirty-six copies. These he distributed to every part of his realm. He also sent copies to Rome, Ephesus, and Byzantium.

Throughout the whole time the Jews were residing in Egypt, they would visit Ptolemy, and he would study the Scripture in Hebrew. He eventually became even more skilled than they were in reading their Scriptures. When the Jews had finished, Ptolemy showed his gratitude in a fitting manner, and after providing them with gifts and provisions, he sent them back to their compatriots. He also had his messengers accompany them, with gifts for their governors, as well as for the high priest Eliezer and his companions. The sagacious translators also asked Ptolemy for one of the copies of the translation, so that they might proudly show it to their compatriots—a request that he granted.

All this occurred through divine providence. God had foreknowledge of the future deeds of the Jewish priests and governors, Annas, Caiaphas, and their compatriots: how they rebelled against Christ at the time of His coming and were consumed by a fanatic desire to crucify Him, as the holy Gospel records; how the resurrection of Christ then took place and many of them accredited His acts of beneficence and kindness toward them, such as His raising of the dead, His healing of the sick, and His performance of miracles that dazzle the mind.

On the Exposure of the Jews for Changing the Scriptures

It was at that time that the priests' opponents began to clamor against them, in the matter of Christ, and caused them to fear for their lives, as their [opponents] wanted to kill them. Therefore, once the priests managed to separate themselves from their opponents and get safely away from them, they gave thought to how they might fabricate proofs against them in the matter of Christ and thereby protect themselves.

The priests had the archives of the Scriptures in their possession, and as we said above, they turned their attention to the Torah. They examined what was distant from their own time but near to Adam and his time, looking for something of which the majority would be ignorant, as it was distant from their own time. From the time of Adam up to the time of Abraham's birth, they removed a total of 1,389 years. For each [Biblical] figure, they

* It seems that we are meant to imagine that there is a single copy of the entire Old Testament, and that each team works on a single book at a time. When they finish, the original of that book gets transferred to another team. In this way, each team independently translates the entire Bible, and Ptolemy ends up with his thirty-six full copies.

removed a specific number of years, from the period that preceded the fathering of children, one hundred years for each. These they transferred to the period that followed the fathering of children. The priests did this because the years that follow the fathering of children are not taken into consideration when calculating the years of the world age. When they reached Cainan the son of Arpachshad the son of Shem the son of Noah,[31] however, they dropped both his name and his years from the Torah. If a person will but look, it will be manifestly clear that a certain number of years has been removed from each and every one of these passages. All that is required is that one personally examine the passage in the Torah. If one does this, the passage in question will testify for itself as to what the priests corrupted and what they removed.

When the priests had secretly brought their task to careful completion, they summoned some of those who opposed them in the matter of our Lord Christ, and in their presence argued that the time of the Christ had not yet come and that He will not appear until the last days. They then said, "We are still in the middle of the world age." And then they said, "Let this Torah judge between us and you"—and they offered as evidence the book of the Torah that had been corrupted by the omission of the years in question. Causing their [opponents] to have doubts was their means of defending themselves.

At the same time, the [priests] made numerous transcriptions of the [corrupted] Torah. These they secretly deposited with their confidants, both in their own districts and in the regions round about—so that they might publicize their readings and there, too, provide support for their argument [with the version characterized] by corruption and omissions. Even until the present today, this corrupt version is to be found in the hands of the greater part of those Christians who employ the Syriac version [of the Old Testament], who were not even aware of [the existence of] the authentic Torah, that which the Seventy had translated—at least until the time of Constantine, the son of Helen, a believer in Christ, who became king 305 years after Christ's advent.

Queen Helen, the mother of Constantine, went to Jerusalem to seek out the relics of our Lord Christ and the books of the prophets.* The Jews handed over to her all such books—including the corrupt Torah. Queen Helen took them to her son, King Constantine. Then, some time later, certain Jews entered the king's presence and told him of the corruption that the priests had introduced into the Torah and the books of the prophets. They also told him that the priests had hidden the [original] copy that the Seventy translators had brought back from Egypt, but that there were identical copies in Alexandria

* The author weaves together his account of Constantine's discovery of the authentic Torah with the famous story of Helen's discovery of the True Cross.

and Rome, as well as in the cities subordinate to them. The king sent to the priests of the Jews and informed them what had been reported to him. They vehemently denied the report. Constantine ordered them to be imprisoned. He then dispatched messengers to Alexandria, Rome, and elsewhere, to fetch their copies of the Scriptures. News of this reached the imprisoned priests, and they were afraid. They thus secretly conveyed their [original] copy to certain of their elders, so that they might deliver it to King Constantine, in compliance with his command. As for these elders, they begged Constantine to pledge that he would grant immunity to the priests. When he gave [such a pledge], they delivered their [original] copy to him. The king then ordered the release of the priests from prison.

When Constantine received the copies from Alexandria, Rome, and elsewhere, he compared them with one another and found them to be identical in structure and wording. He then called for the corrupt Torah. He found that its corruption was manifestly clear: one [Biblical] figure after another, with their years, one hundred [years] at a time, were moved from the beginning of their enumerated years (those that get counted toward the number of years in the world age) to their later years (those not counted).

The reason why King Constantine had sought out the Torah and the books of the prophets is that on an earlier occasion he had asked the Jews about what is found in the book of the prophet Daniel: about his prophecy[32] of the coming of Christ and His crucifixion, at the end of the "seven weeks" and the "sixty-two weeks,"* following the "seventy years" that the Israelites resided in Babylon; about the words of the angel Gabriel to the prophet Daniel on this subject, how he added certain qualifications to his words, how he bade him to "consider his words . . . from the time that he heard them,"[33] and how he specified what he said regarding the coming of Christ and His crucifixion, [that it would take place] at the completion of those weeks, provided that one begins counting from the points in time that the angel Gabriel had indicated to the prophet Daniel (from the time of his words to him, from the time of the return of the Israelites from Babylon, and from the time of the rebuilding of the Temple).[34]

When King Constantine realized that the Jews were engaged in fabrication and deception [. . .]†[35] and their argument that from ancient times their kings were called "the christened ones" (*al-mamsuhin*). He said to them,

* As Agapius will argue, the term "week" in Daniel's prophecy refers to a period of seven years.

† There seems to be a lacuna in the text, perhaps substantial. To judge from the context, Constantine will have summoned the Jewish priests, to discuss why they changed the Torah and how their changes are connected to prophecies about the time of the coming of Christ. The text resumes in the midst of a discussion of Dan. 9:25, which speaks of the "Anointed or Christened One" ("Christ") who will come at the end of the period of seven and sixty-two weeks. The Jewish argument will have been that the "Christ" mentioned by Daniel is not the Messiah but one of the kings of Israel.

"Who among them was called 'the Christ' [*al-masih*], or arose after the Babylonian captivity and the return of the Israelites from Babylon, so as to fulfill [Daniel's] prophecy about these weeks?"

[The Jews] replied not a word to him, but stood there dumbfounded and stunned and then said, "The Christ who is prophesied is due to come in the last days and at the end of the age. And as for us, we are still waiting for him, for we are in the middle of the world age."

He questioned them, "And what part of the world age do you say you are now in?"

They answered him, "The world age ends in the year 7,000, and we are now in the year 4,000, more or less."

In response, Constantine charged them with lying, for he had seen how shameless their dishonest responses were.

Thereafter, Constantine sent to the bishops[36] an account of what had happened, of what he had discovered regarding the prophet Daniel's prophecies of Christ, and of what he had observed about the weakness of the arguments of the Jews on this subject. He also asked the bishops to give a detailed explanation of the matter. The bishops[37] requested privacy. Marveling at the discussion of this subject and longing to understand it thoroughly, Constantine dismissed his privy council, who had been taking pleasure in watching [Constantine] debate these things with the Jews. He told the bishops what the Jews had said and bade them to discuss the matter, which they agreed to do.

The bishops then said, "Your majesty, the Jews' refusal to speak the truth regarding Christ is a consequence of what they inherited from their distant ancestors, who rejected Christ out of fear that their religion would be abolished, with the result that they became like men driven mad by enmity and iniquity. The proof against their claim can be clearly seen from their argument regarding our proximity to the age of Adam. If you were to examine this subject and learn the truth through [this examination], you would understand this well. We have presented to you[38] the two versions [of Scripture] and shown you everything therein: (i) the version of the Seventy wise men, who translated the Torah for King Ptolemy Philadelphus, some three hundred years prior to the advent and arrival of our Lord Christ; and (ii) the version of the Torah that is today in Jewish hands, in its present state of corruption, with years removed from it by their distant ancestors, Annas and Caiaphas, chief priests at the time of Christ. There is yet another source from which we can argue this, bolstering it with both reason and evidence. It is a lengthy subject to discuss, however. Should your majesty permit, we shall give you a complete account, and explain the total number of years in the weeks mentioned

by the prophet Daniel, taking it forward as far as the time of Christ's death, proceeding one period at a time and one king at a time."

The king replied, "Please do so."

The bishops then said:

The divine prophet Jeremiah prophesied[39] that Jerusalem would be destroyed, its walls razed, and its inhabitants taken captive to Babylon, where they would remain for seventy years. When Nebuchadnezzar became the king of Babylon, he raided Jerusalem and took captive a large group of its people, including the prophet Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar continued to raid it, time and time again, over the course of the next twenty years. On his final raid he razed its walls and burnt its Temple to the ground, and thus finished taking its people captive and destroying it.

Fifty years later, while living in Babylon, the prophet Daniel remembered what God had said[40] through the prophet Jeremiah. It then became clear to him that the time in question had drawn near. Thereupon, he withdrew to pray to his Lord and supplicate Him, with fasting, weeping, abasement, entreaties, and sadness. He fasted for twenty-one days, eating no bread and drinking no water. He did not sleep. As he was offering up his prayers to God, he made mention of what God had promised the Israelites, through the prophets to whom He had revealed Christ's advent, and then urged [the exiles] to stand firm and live righteously, and asked [God] to reveal the object of their hope, the time of their return to Jerusalem.

Because of the rectitude of Daniel's faith, the meekness of his heart, and the sincerity of his intention, during all the time that he was offering up his invocations and prayers—because of all this, I say, God showed him the object of his quest, for upright behavior is [always] rewarded with understanding. God removed the veil from what was hidden and [uncovered] what Daniel did not know, and sent to him the angel Gabriel, the chief of his angels, so as to give Daniel answers to all his questions. The angel Gabriel said to him: "Daniel, know and understand my words, you man of desires. In truth, you will return and will rebuild Jerusalem—and until the time of the coming of the Anointed King [, Christ] (and His incarnation and His crucifixion), there will be seven weeks and two and sixty weeks, after which He will be killed and the sacred city destroyed."[41]

[These verses are explained as follows]:[42] The angel Gabriel began by saying to the prophet Daniel that "the vision" and "the word"[43] of the prophets would be brought to completion, meaning, the return of the Israelites after seventy years, in confirmation of the word of the prophet Jeremiah;[44] and that, after their return, Jerusalem would be rebuilt;[45] and that, once it has been rebuilt, one may begin to count the weeks of the Anointed One (i.e.,

Christ), ending with His crucifixion.[46] Because God is just and His words are true, He brought to pass all that of which the angel Gabriel had spoken. The arrival of all the Israelites to Babylon took twenty years, in that they came in groups, one after another. In the same way, their return took twenty years, in that they departed in groups, one after another. Nevertheless, they all spent the same amount of time in Babylon, that is, seventy years. This was in accord with the words of the prophet.[47]

The first group of captives reached Babylon in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.[48] They remained there for the duration of his reign, which lasted until his death, that is, a total of forty-three further years. After him, the dynasty lasted another five years. Then came the reign of Cyrus the Persian, another twenty-two years. And this makes for a total of seventy years and accords with the words of the prophet. The last group of captives to arrive in Babylon was in the twenty-second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign,[49] and they remained in Babylon for the duration of his reign, that is, twenty-three further years. After him, the dynasty lasted another five years. Then came the reign of Cyrus, another thirty-one years; then Cambyses, another eight years; the Magian, one more year; and Darius, two more years. And this, too, makes for a total of seventy years. In sum, the return [from Babylon] came to pass in accord with the seventy years of which the prophet Jeremiah had spoken. It was only then that they started to rebuild Jerusalem, in accord with the words of the angel Gabriel to the prophet Daniel. No time was determined for its completion, though. This is because human actions, in that they result from their free choice, sometimes happen earlier than they should, and sometimes later, as a result of circumstances that may chance to hinder their work. Acts done by human beings are not like acts done by God, as the latter occur only within the limits and times that have been predetermined. An example of this is how it was predetermined for the Israelites that they were to reside in Babylon for seventy years. Or again, the length of time separating the advent of our Lord Christ and His death was predetermined at a certain number of years.

Acts of God, which He foreknows, are hidden from human beings unless He reveals their duration to His servants. If there is something that will benefit them, He reveals it to His prophets, in order that they might announce it and thereby encourage people to continue doing good. Even when He begins by addressing them with threats and warnings of future punishment, a recompense of their wicked deeds, He announces this openly and reveals when it will happen, so as to restore the people to obedience and urge them to repentance. He strikes fear into their hearts, with visible signs and frightful portents in the heavens, to make them desire the mercy and kindness of their Lord. God thus turns waiting into an opportunity for them to turn back

[to Him] in repentance. It is as happened in the days of the Flood, or when languages were first divided from one another [when the Tower of Babel was built], or in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, or [the repentance of] Nineveh, and so forth.

The Israelites started to rebuild the city and did not stop working on this until the days of Artaxerxes Longimanus.* He sent his cupbearer [Nehemiah] to inspect the rebuilding of the Temple,[50] which was then in its forty-sixth year, counting from the commencement of work on it, according to the words addressed to Christ by the Jewish teachers, "This Temple was built (that is, completed and finished) in forty-six years. And you, you say that you will raise it, in three days."[51] No one should think that the Jews spent forty-six entire years rebuilding the Temple. Rather, it is as we said, they completed and finished rebuilding it in the forty-sixth year, counting from the end of their captivity in Babylon. This is what the king's messenger, [the cupbearer Nehemiah] told the king when he returned.

In order to count the "weeks of Christ,"† one must begin from the time when the rebuilding of the city had been completed, as indicated by the angel Gabriel when he spoke first of the "return" and then of the "rebuilding" and then of the counting of the weeks,‡ that is, from the time when there were still twenty-five years remaining in the reign of Artaxerxes. Between the completion of the rebuilding and the crucifixion of Christ there was thus a total of 483 years, that is to say, the sum of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.§ These we set forth in detail a bit later in this book, one king after another, with the years of every king.

Again, it is recorded that both the priesthood and the political autonomy of the Israelites came to an end during the days of King Herod, in whose reign Christ's advent came to pass.¶ The prophecy of the patriarch Jacob and the prophet Moses was thus fulfilled: "The scepter[52] of kingship will not disappear from Judah, nor the guidance from their presence (meaning, the prophets), until the coming of Him to whom the kingship belongs, even He whom the Gentiles await."[53]

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* The Persian king Artaxerxes I Longimanus (r. 465–424 BC).

† That is, the seven-year periods of which Daniel had spoken.

‡ Agapius is referring to the sequence of items in Dan. 9:25: "From the time there went out this message: *Return* and *rebuild* Jerusalem, to the coming of an Anointed Prince *seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*."

§ Sixty-nine periods of seven years make up 483 years.

¶ Agapius regards Jewish political autonomy to have ended with the accession of Herod (not ethnically Jewish), while the Jewish priesthood ended with Herod's murder of Hyrcanus and his son, Jonathan.

We noted that the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks are equal to 483 years, a number we get by multiplying the number of weeks by seven. The following offers a detailed presentation of these 483 years, about which the angel Gabriel spoke to the prophet Daniel, with the names of the kings and the number of years they reigned, king by king.[54]

The Kings of the Persians

41 years — Artaxerxes Longimanus
5 years — Artaxerxes II
1 year — Sogdianus
19 years — Darius Nothus
40 years — his son, Artaxerxes
25 years — Artaxerxes Ochus
4 years — Arses the son of Ochus
6 years — Darius the son of Arses
The total for the kings of the east: 141 years

The Kings of the West

Next, an enumeration of the years of the Ptolemies (i.e., the Victorious).
12 years — Ptolemy Alexander
40 years — Ptolemy Logos (Logician)[55]
38 years — Ptolemy Philadelphus (Lover of His Brother), for whom the Scriptures were translated by the Seventy translators
24 years — Ptolemy Euergetes (Doer)
17 years — Ptolemy Philopater (Lover of His Father)
24 years — Ptolemy Epiphanes (proper name)
25 years — Ptolemy Philometor (Lover of His Mother)
19 years — Ptolemy Ergates (Doer, also)
12 years — Ptolemy Soter (Savior)
10 years — Ptolemy Alexander
8 years — Ptolemy Philip (Lover of Horses)[56]
30 years — Ptolemy Dionysius (proper name)
15 years — Cleopatra (Precious Glory)
35 years — Herod, King of the Jews
33 years — Our Lord Christ
The total for the kings of the west: 342 years.
The total for the kings of the west and the east: 483 years.

End of the Account, on the Scriptures and Their Differences

It is thus that King Constantine sought out the books of the Torah and examined both them and the books of the prophets, as well as the relics of Christ. Prior to this, there were no Christians who understood these secrets or the corruption and excision wrought by the Jews—apart from some men distinguished in learning. As for the common people, they knew only the corrupt Torah. Indeed, even today the mass of Christians, eastern and western, do not know the reason for the differences between the Greek Torah translated by the Seventy and the Syriac Torah, which is a translation of the corrupt and deficient Hebrew and which nonetheless is read by all Christians in their churches.

As we said at the beginning, corruption and omissions end with the birth of Abraham the son of Terah. It has thus affected the text from the time of Adam and the completion of creation up to the time of Terah's fathering of Abraham, with the result that 1,389 years have been removed from the history of the world.

The corrupt Torah and all the books of the prophets in the possession of Christians have been dispersed from these Syriac copies to all the regions of the earth, with the result that Christians are unable to translate them or interpret what is commanded. As for the learned and the wise, and those who seek either to translate the books of the prophets from one language to another or to interpret their contents, there is not one who has been able to translate even a small portion of the Syriac Scripture. And this is because of how it was corrupted and truncated by the Jews, after the resurrection of Christ, and made to differ from the version of the Seventy.

The Account of Abraham

Now then, we have translated and analyzed the account of what was translated by the Seventy and of why King Constantine examined the reason behind the discrepancies found in the Scriptures. I shall now return to where we left off, in the days of Abraham, to the point we had reached before beginning this last account. [Agapius here resumes his presentation of Biblical history, with the life of Abraham.]

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Chapter 6

Sulayman al-Ghazzi

سليمان الغزي

Samuel Noble

As the author of the first collection of Christian religious poetry in Arabic, the early eleventh-century Palestinian bishop Sulayman al-Ghazzi (or Solomon of Gaza) holds a unique place in the history of Arab Christian literature. Although there appear to be no outside sources for his biography, his highly personal verse has allowed the editor of his works, Néophytos Edelby, to reconstruct the outline of his life. While Sulayman was still a boy, his father, named either Hasan or Basila (or perhaps both),[1] abandoned his mother, and Sulayman entered a monastery as a youth. Shortly after taking his vows, however, he abandoned the monastery and embarked upon a life of worldly success. He got married, had a son, and became wealthy. In his old age, disaster struck, with the death of his son at the age of twenty, followed by the deaths of his wife and his only grandson, Ibrahim, and the loss of his wealth. Having lost everything, Sulayman once again returned to the monastic life. This sense of painful loss had a profound effect on his poetry, where cries of despair over the loss of his son appear in juxtaposition to extended reflections on the redemptive power of the Incarnation and hope in the Resurrection. Around the age of eighty, Sulayman was ordained bishop of a see in Palestine, no doubt because of his great learning, which is evident in his writings. Sulayman died some time after the year 1027.

The personal tragedies that marked Sulayman al-Ghazzi's long life echoed the tragedies experienced by the Christians of Palestine at this time, which are also reflected in his poetry. Almost simultaneous to the Byzantine reconquest of Antioch in 969, the armies of the Fatimid dynasty, followers of the Ismaili sect of Shiʿi Islam who were based in Egypt, conquered Palestine. In the year 996 an eleven-year-old boy rose to the Fatimid throne, under the name al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah.[2] The initial years of al-Hakim's

rule, corresponding to his teenage years, saw relative tolerance for Christians and Jews within his domain. Starting in 1004, however, he imposed a series of increasingly harsh restrictions on non-Muslims, beginning with a general prohibition of wine and evolving into the strict enforcement of the so-called "Pact of ʿUmar,"* requiring Christians to wear a distinctive belt called a *zunnar* and an iron cross around their necks and prohibiting outdoor processions and the public display of crosses.[3] In 1009, apparently scandalized by the annual celebration of the descent of the Holy Fire in Jerusalem, al-Hakim ordered the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[4] In subsequent years he organized attempts to seize or destroy all churches and monasteries in Palestine and Egypt. This was accompanied by widespread forced conversions of Christians and Jews to Islam and an unsuccessful attempt to expel all Christians to Byzantine territory. For reasons now unclear, towards the end of his rule, al-Hakim reversed course and became more tolerant of non-Muslims, allowing churches to be rebuilt and Christians who had converted under pressure to return to Christianity. However, the latter part of his reign witnessed increasing intolerance for Muslims, as al-Hakim began to see himself as a manifestation of God. He disappeared in the year 1020, presumably assassinated.

Despite the dire circumstances in which he lived, Sulayman left behind a considerable volume of writings, including ninety-seven poems totaling over 3,000 lines and six short prose works. In these prose writings he was primarily concerned with defending Orthodox Christology and Trinitarian theology. While he never mentions Islam by name, it is clear that he wrote his refutations of earlier heresies, such as those of the Arians, Macedonians, and Maronites, with an eye to defending Orthodox belief against Muslim attacks. Most of these prose works are largely derivative of earlier Arab Christian authors, particularly Theodore Abu Qurra (see chapter 2) and the Nestorian theologian Elias of Nisibis (d. 1046), who was Sulayman's contemporary.[5] However, in two of his essays, *On the Cross* and *On Man as Microcosm*, Sulayman makes highly original use of cosmological ideas similar to those propagated in the esoteric philosophical writings of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwan al-Safaʾ), in order to demonstrate the cosmic significance of the Cross and the Incarnation.[6]

Sulayman's most significant literary achievement is undoubtedly his poetic *Diwan*. Before him there had been a number of Christian poets whose works had entered into the standard Arabic literary canon. These included the pre-Islamic poet ʿAdi ibn Zayd[7] and the Umayyad court poet al-Akhtal. However, these poets seldom directly addressed their Christian faith and

* On the "Pact of ʿUmar" see the introduction to this book.

never composed verse on specifically Christian themes. The following provocative lines by al-Akhtal, in which he celebrates his refusal to convert to Islam, are a rare exception:

I do not willingly fast at Ramadan
And I do not eat the meat of sacrifices
I never get up and bray like an ass,
Hayya ʿala l-falah ["rush to success"]*
But I drink a bit of wine
And bow down at daybreak.

None of Sulayman's writings have been previously translated into a Western language, and those few scholars who have discussed his poetry have come to disparate conclusions about their artistic merit. Edelby considered him "more versifier than poet," while Sidney Griffith has described his poems as "haunting poems of grief and religious fervor."[8] It is true that his poems frequently break meter and contain many colloquialisms and that they also only rarely conform to classical Arabic notions of genre. However, in many of his poems Sulayman was able to convey both Christian doctrine and personal feeling in a way that is unique in the history of Arabic verse and thus attains a level of artistic achievement that transcends his lapses of language and genre.

The themes most frequently encountered in the *Diwan* demonstrate the interconnectedness of Sulayman's personal tragedies, his Palestinian environment, and his highly developed theology of the Incarnation. As is evident in the two poems translated below, Sulayman is eager to stress two central Christological ideas. The first is that Christ is God, present in the Old Testament as well as the New.† The second is that Christ is fully united to humankind and in this union salvation is achieved: when Christ died, humankind died with Him, and when He ascended into heaven, He brought humankind up to heaven with Him.

In the first poem translated below, also the first in Edelby's edition of the *Diwan*, Sulayman glorifies the Church and the triumph of correct belief over heresy. He begins by pointing out that baptism is no guarantee of correct belief and then quickly transitions into a celebration of the universal-

* A phrase from the Muslim call for prayer.

† In the Greek patristic reading of the Old Testament, certain events such as the burning bush on Sinai and the pillar of fire that went before the Israelites in the desert are understood to be manifestations of God the Word, considered to be the "Pre-Incarnate Logos." Thus, Sulayman sees Christ as manifest in all God's actions in the Old Testament as well.

ity of the Church, as manifested in the great diversity of Christian peoples throughout the world. He then returns to the theme of heresy, listing historical heresies before celebrating the truth of Orthodox belief. Sulayman illustrates this belief with a detailed confession of Christ, the Word of God, which enumerates the various events in the Old and New Testaments in which Christ was active. The poem closes with a brief reflection on the ethical requirements of the new law brought by Christ.

The second poem is No. 59 in Edelby's edition. While it closely follows the traditional Arabic genre of *zuhdiyyat*, ascetical verse, it is also autobiographical. Sulayman begins by lamenting his inability to truly repent of his sins, rhetorically asking who is able to cure him of this fatal malady. He then answers his question with a description of how Christ's death was able to accomplish humanity's redemption from death. Sulayman then describes his sorrow over the death of his son and how this spurs his desire for repentance and renunciation. He ends the poem with an exhortation to his soul to live a humble, Christian life and a meditation on the hour of his death.

Translation

A. "Not All Baptized with Water Are Christians"

Not all baptized with water are Christians
    Without the baptism of the life of the world to come;
In Christ the peoples of the earth have been baptized
    Though some of them afterwards showed hypocrisy.
They became like a body's parts in its natural state—
    Some helpful, some unreliable.
How many patriarchs are unpraiseworthy in their service,
    Miserable bishops and metropolitans,
Who are among the heretics, in place of truth,
    Preferring falsehood and slander!
Over them, God has favored a Church
    Whose stones are gathered from all corners and climes.
Truth has built her an edifice
    Rising to heaven on pillars and columns,
Fashioned from chrysolite,
    Precious stones, sapphires, and pearls.
Her foundation is the rock of faith,
    Rooted deep with pillars and walls.

All bodily creatures are pleased to see it
When it appears in races and colors.
Byzantines, Russians, and Franks
Joined with Indians, Khuzestanis, Abkhaz, and Alans
Armenians and Pechenegs in agreement
With the people of the Jazira, namely Harran.
And Copts too, in the Lower Egypt gather together
From Upper Egypt to Qus and Aswan.[9]
People of Shiraz and Ahwaz in harmony
With Iraq, unto furthest Khorasan.
From the place of the sunrise to the place of its setting,
To the Euphrates, to Sihon and Gihon.*
White, blond, and brown in their churches
Praise God with the yellow and the black.
All of them have come to the religion of Christ
And are guided, gaining profit from loss.
Seventy nations, each with a language
Branching off from the one Syriac tongue.†[10]
Hebrew was the speech of God's apostles
Before they set out with the mission of the Gospel.
Each apostle gained a language,‡
Beautiful, reliable, and clear.
Not out of weakness but having heard proof,
Those to whom they preached responded with faith.
So they spread out among their nations,
None fearing the devil's wiles.
When their service to God was done, they slept,
Having roused many sleepers.
After them there arose, in league with the devil,
Idolatrous, oppressive sects.
Arius said: The Word of God, our Creator—
That is, the Pre-Eternal One—is created, corruptible, finite.
Macedonius said: The Spirit is not to be counted
As a hypostasis, since it is corporeal.
Nestorius said: Christ's divinity and His humanity

* Cf. Gen. 2:10–14. Sihon (an alternative name for the Biblical Pishon) and Gihon were identified by Arabs with the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers in Central Asia respectively.

† Medieval Arabs, both Muslim and Christian, generally held that Syriac was the language spoken by Adam and Eve.

‡ This is a reference to Pentecost (Acts 2:1–12).

Are [not only] two substances, but even two hypostases.
Jacob* said: Since the Word of God is one hypostasis
It is clear that it is not two in nature.
Maron†[11] said that the Father from eternity,
Who is spiritual, had a created son in the flesh.
And one group‡ says that the Christ of God is too honorable
To receive the penalty of a brutal offender.
These are the sects of those who out of unbelief
Strayed from the path of guidance like blind men.
Favor is for the Orthodox,
Who followed God's true way.
They said that the God of the Throne acts through His Word,
Through whom His creation appeared, near and far.
Creation occurs within the created realm,
Coming into being from the One who has no partner in His dominion.
This is why His Word remains with Him from the beginning,[12]
It dwelt within a human person.[13]
It became Christ, mighty in divinity
A name with a single, united meaning, not two.§
A Son grew up for the Lord of the Throne, our Creator,
Begotten for harmony and goodwill.
Adam was victorious in Paradise where
The magnanimous Lord placed him, blessed with favor and good grace.
Transgression cast him out like a sheep,
And removed him from the sheepfold.
He showed him signs, wishing to return him
To honor after disgrace.
[Signs that] the Creator will dwell within the sheepfold,
And they will cling to Him like sheep
Until the afflicted part from their illness,
And His unity is affirmed in the subtlety of their bodies.
He is the One who saved Israel from that man
Who oppressed the people of Moses, son of Imran.
He is the One who openly delivered them from the waters of the sea[14]

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* That is, Jacob Baradaeus (d. 578), the founder of the Miaphysite hierarchy in Syria, after whom the "Jacobites" are named.

† That is, John Maron, the seventh- or eighth-century founder of the Maronite Church.

‡ That is, the Muslims. Like John of Damascus, Sulayman considers Islam to be the final Christian heresy.

§ This is said in response to Nestorius.

And settled them in the land of Pharan.[15]
He is the One who overshadowed them with a cloud
And let no bodies be burned by the sun.[16]
He is the One who caused water to spring from a rock
So that all the thirsty may drink.[17]
He is the One who chose Aaron,[18]
Forgiving the people's sinful sacrifice.*
He is the One who guided Joshua, son of Nun,
To the Promised Land, beside Amman.[19]
He is the One who kept the sun from setting,
So that walls could be destroyed.[20]
He is the One who erected His temple at Sion,
As a holy place, built by Solomon.[21]
He is the One who speaking the truth,
Promised to raise up there kings crowned in diadems.
He is the One who established [Sion] for the peoples of the earth,
Leading them towards it, without disdain.
He is the One who with clay restored sight to the eyes of a blind man,
And washed them pure in the well of Siloam.†[22]
He is the One who cleansed the lepers who begged Him,
Purifying their bodies.[23]
He is the One who sated thousands with bread when they came,
And made five loaves suffice them.[24]
He is the One whose robe the woman touched,
And was healed of a flow of blood.[25]
He is the One who ordered the paralytic
To carry that upon which he had been carried on others' backs.[26]
He is the One who struck the demons possessing the Magdalene;[27]
He who is Lord of Man and Jinn.
He is the One who at the wedding changed water to wine,
More fragrant than the oil of ben.[28]
He is the One who returned the centurion's servant to his master,
Bearing a sword among horsemen.[29]
He is the One who revealed the Samaritan woman's secret,
And it appeared without concealment.[30]
He is the One who set out upon the sea,
Walking on water in honor of Simon.[31]

* The sinful sacrifice is the worship of the golden calf.

† Here Sulayman shifts from Christ's "pre-Incarnate" manifestations in the Old Testament to His role in the Gospel.

He is the One who on the Sabbath said, "Lazarus, arise!"
And he arose, wrapped in graveclothes.[32]
He is the One who granted forgiveness to the sinful woman
Who poured perfumed oil on His feet.[33]
He is the One who, as one wise and good,
Humbly washed the feet of His apostles.[34]
He is the One whom they crucified,
Whose hands they nailed to the cross beside two thieves.[35]
He is the One who saved us from hellfire,
From our dying in the sins of this passing world.
He is the One who raised us up to heaven in a cloud[36]
After our fall and humiliation.
He is the One who sent forth the Gospel
Borne by the apostles for the faith of young and old.
They made peace among all the people of the earth.
The evil of enmity transformed into brotherly love.
By the faith of our father Abraham, people became his sons,
Who before that had not been his children.
The Law of Life spread among humankind,
And they no longer repay enmity with enmity.
They cast down this world and its favor,
Enjoining the truth: good for good.
They do not weep in dread when they see death,
And do not quake in fear of rulers.
Because their souls on the Day of Resurrection,
Shall attain salvation, if they do monks' deeds.
Praise God, O children of the Church!
Glorify Him in hymns and songs!
And ask Him, on behalf of the poor man reciting them,
The reward of forgiveness.*

B. "Soul, Do Not Mourn Death"

Soul, do not mourn death but weep for me,
That you might cleanse me of sins' stain.
My poor eye, even shedding tears of blood,
Without the soul's repentance you can't save me.
My body lusted for pleasure in its prime,
And I disdained my spirit.

* As is conventional in many Arabic poems, the author refers to himself in the final line.

How can I repent when my soul does not obey
And continues to neglect my religion?
How can I repent when temptations
Draw my eye to evil action?
How can I repent when my ears incline
To obscene jokes and words that don't concern me?
How can I repent when the false speech of my tongue
Casts me into scandal?
How can I repent when my grasp does not hold back,
When it covets luxury, and by not abstaining it destroys me?
How can I repent when my soul is unsatisfied with ordinary food,
Though each day's bread suffices?
I am wretched, my works are corrupt,
And God will repay my evil deeds.
I am poor and no money will avail on the day of death
And no patience will console me.
I am sick and no doctor can be found.
Can any man cure the disease of death,
Other than Christ, whose divinity sacrificed the lamb of His humanity
For my sake, and redeems me?
Like Isaac, His sacrifice was pure,
Though [Isaac] was set free for a time.
Likewise my Master in human form set me free.
He holds my destiny, though He conceals it from me.
They put Him on the cross, errorless, sinless
And in His members, they also stretched me out.*
In His death my human nature died and He also arose with it,
In His Adamic body, fashioned with clay.
From His side flowed water and blood,[37]
Offered for the salvation of the elect.
They placed Him in a coffin, His shrouds sealed
With the seal of the authorities.
Yet He arose, alive, and the faithful rose with Him,
In a covenant forever giving me life.
He is the One in whom the Holy Spirit spoke at the hand of John,
And He will clothe me in a royal robe.
When I fast, fasting in Him is of more use
Than food that continues to harm me.

* Sulayman is making the Christological point that in Christ's being crucified all human nature is hung on the cross.

My soul, do not seek passing wealth,
Though you goad to greedily seek this world.
You lure me so much to what makes my life listless,
And to run after this world to make me miserable.
Have you not heard a lesson in the Gospel,
That will truly guide us both to piety?
The Lord did not call the rich His brothers,
But rather the weak and the wretched.
O soul, do not listen to those who strayed from truth,
But obey me in faith.
I raised a son, who I thought would inherit from me after death,
But my son died before me.
Night overtook him,
Leaving a father sorrowful and distraught.
In his youth his body bent like a willow bough,
Or like basil-branches.
I buried a twenty-year-old son, and here I am
An old man having reached eighty.
If I could redeem him, I would not be so afflicted by his death,
But how can I redeem the one who should redeem me?
I am averse to those friendly to me.
I weep for him, and none of them can console me.
I wished to spend the rest of my life,
Clinging to repentance in monasteries,
So that I can repent and my soul will not regret
A life that leads me to death,
If not for a household to care for and maintain,
Who hamper me from renunciation.
O soul, be humble to all people
And forgive those who do evil.
Feed the hungry, give drink to all the thirsty,
Then do what the Gospel commands me.
Clothe the naked, comfort all those in pain,
Give shelter to strangers and those in sorrows.
Do not let the world and its beauty deceive you.
It will not remain without change, while you preserve me forever.
My body is from dust, my livelihood from dust,
And in dust death will dissolve me.
Weep, O soul, when I lie on my deathbed at night,
Surrounded by my loved ones

So I may die and they can help me depart,
And place me in a coffin.
Bearing me on their shoulders, not letting me fall,
And putting me in the tomb.
O Lord, cover my deeds when they are revealed,
On the Day of Resurrection, written on a scroll.
God's Church is dearer to me and more protective of me
Than any nursemaid who once raised me.

Suggested Reading

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Chapter 7

ʿAbdallah ibn al-Fadl al-Antaki

عبد الله بن الفضل الأنطاكي

Samuel Noble

In the year 969 the Byzantine army made its triumphal entry into the city of Antioch. Although Antioch had once been the third most important city in the Eastern Mediterranean, from the time of its capture by the Muslims in 637 it had declined into a relatively sleepy border city and military garrison.[1] With its reintegration into the Byzantine Empire, Antioch once again became a flourishing administrative, ecclesial, and intellectual center. There does not seem to have been any significant effort to re-Hellenize Antioch's predominately Arabic-speaking Orthodox Christian population. Rather, cultural activity continued to flourish beside Greek, in Arabic as well as Georgian. The uniquely cosmopolitan intellectual life of Byzantine Antioch, a city finding itself halfway between Baghdad and Constantinople both geographically and culturally, is best illustrated by the works of the deacon Abu l-Fath ʿAbdallah ibn al-Fadl ibn ʿAbdallah al-Mutran al-Antaki.

All that is known of Ibn al-Fadl's life is what can be ascertained from manuscripts of his works. From his name it is clear that he was a deacon, the grandson of a bishop also named ʿAbdallah, and that he lived in the region of Antioch. From the dating of some of his works, we know that he was active in the middle of the eleventh century. His education, both in Greek and in Arabic, appears to have been outstanding. According to his own statements, he studied patristic texts in Greek with an unidentified teacher named Symeon and Arabic grammar with the renowned Muslim poet, grammarian, free-thinker, and misanthrope Abu al-ʿAlaʾ al-Maʿarri (d. 1058).[2] Ibn al-Fadl put the skills he gained through this bilingual education into preparing translations from Greek into Arabic as well as writing and compiling original philosophical and theological works in Arabic based on a wide variety of Greek and Arabic sources. His translations included

numerous patristic texts, including works by John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, John of Damascus, Maximus the Confessor, and Isaac the Syrian. Perhaps his most influential translations, however, were Biblical: his Arabic translations of the Psalms and of Gospel and Epistle readings according to the lectionary remained in widespread use in a variety of Arabic-speaking Christian communities until the early modern era. Scattered throughout his translations, including that of the Psalms, are his own comments on the translated texts, which clarify points of philosophy, theology, and grammar.

His Arabic style is generally of a much higher quality than that of other medieval translators, as he deliberately employed a somewhat elevated literary register rather than the semicolloquial language used by many Christian Arab writers. The most striking illustration of this is his Arabic translation of the *Loci Communes* of Pseudo-Maximus the Confessor,[3] a Byzantine florilegium of edifying quotations from Christian and pagan texts. In this translation, entitled in Arabic the *Book of the Garden* (*Kitab al-Rawda*), Ibn al-Fadl deliberately uses rare words and difficult grammatical constructions and then provides glosses and grammatical commentary on his own translation. In this way he transforms texts from the Greek heritage into a vehicle for Arabic linguistic erudition.

In addition to his translations, Ibn al-Fadl is the author of a number of original works of varying lengths that address a variety of theological and philosophical issues. The most important of these, the *Book of Benefit* (*Kitab al-Manfaʿa*) is an eclectic mix of texts from a very wide variety of sources, Christian, Muslim, and Pagan. It includes philosophical passages adapted from sources as diverse as Plato, Sextus, John Philoponos, al-Farabi, and Abu Bakr al-Razi as well as discussions of theological issues in line with the perspective of Arab Christian theologians active in Iraq, such as the Jacobite Yahya ibn ʿAdi and the Nestorians Israel of Kashkar and Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Tayyib. By contrast, in another work entitled *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, written perhaps late in life at the behest of a bishop, John of Manbij, then located in Muslim territory, Ibn al-Fadl draws exclusively on Greek patristic sources in order to articulate Orthodox Christological teaching.

Intellectually, Ibn al-Fadl can be seen as the meeting point of two "Hellenisms": the Hellenism of Byzantium and the Hellenism of the Muslim caliphate. His wide-ranging curiosity and ability to access an enormous variety of texts in both Greek and Arabic allowed him to synthesize patristic and Arabic thought (both Muslim and Christian) on the basis of their common Greek philosophical foundations.[4] Although Ibn al-Fadl generally

uses an encyclopedic and eclectic methodology in his writings, preferring to present and comment on ideas from various sources to constructing his own fully coherent philosophy, the most consistently present theme in his works is the importance of reason in articulating and understanding Christian belief. This is concisely expressed in one of his comments in the *Book of the Garden* where he states, "One who has studied the sciences has philosophized, and one who has philosophized has come to know God to a certain extent."[5]

The place of reason and Greek philosophy in Ibn al-Fadl's theological methodology is well illustrated by the two essays translated below. In them, he attempts to argue for the existence of both human free will and divine providence against a variety of deterministic teachings, especially astrological determinism. The question of determinism is frequently raised in the history of debates between Muslims and Christians, given that the traditional understanding of God's sovereignty in Sunni Islam severely curtails any concept of human free will and human agency and insists that God is ultimately the creator of all, evil as well as good.[6] Nevertheless, Ibn al-Fadl seems to be primarily concerned with combatting deterministic beliefs among fellow Christians, as he focuses most of his attention on refuting an impersonal and deistic concept of a God who takes no care for creation and on combatting the belief in astrological determinism, which was widespread in all cultures of the Middle East in his time. Ibn al-Fadl's reliance on Greek philosophical authorities alongside Christian sources suggests that his audience is primarily Christians who, perhaps under the sway of pagan philosophy, were inclined toward deism and astrological determinism.[7]

The first of the two essays—entitled "An Essay Containing Ideas Useful for the Soul and Answers to Questions that People Frequently Ask and Dispute which are Extracted from the Sayings of the Holy Fathers and Select Philosophers"—was first published in 1929 by Paul Sbath on the basis of two manuscripts.[8] Here it is translated in its entirety for the first time in a Western language on the basis of the printed edition and with reference to three further manuscripts: Beirut, Bibliothèque Orientale, MSS ar. 503, 541, and 542.[9] In this essay Ibn al-Fadl seeks to refute three different claims, which he attributes to three different groups of people: the belief that human affairs are determined by the stars, the belief that God is the cause of evil, and the rejection of God's foresight and providence. These three opinions, in Ibn al-Fadl's view, are united by their excessive interest in the reasons for inequality in people's health, wealth, and length of life. As he refutes each of these views in succession, he employs references and quotations, often extensive, from Aristotle, Nemesius of Emesa (mistakenly identified as Gregory of Nyssa),

John of Damascus, Dionysius the Areopagite, and Basil the Great. Ibn al-Fadl concludes the essay with a long digression, adapted from the tenth-century writer Basil the Lesser of Caesarea, which seeks to reconcile Gregory of Nazianzus's statement that God "moved" with the Aristotelian doctrine, mentioned earlier in the essay, that God is the motionless First Mover. Although several of the works to which he makes reference were available in Arabic in Ibn al-Fadl's lifetime, it is clear that he often makes use of the Greek originals and translates them himself into Arabic. His translations here, however, are free to the point of being loose adaptations, a feature also found to varying degrees in many of his patristic translations.

The second essay translated below is a brief refutation of astrology. It was published along with a German translation in 1937 by Georg Graf on the basis of two manuscripts.[10] In it Ibn al-Fadl attempts to demonstrate that astrology is incompatible with both religious and philosophical ethics and that the acceptance of its principles leads to the rejection of human moral agency.

Translation

A. An Essay Containing Ideas Useful for the Soul and Answers to Questions that People Frequently Ask and Dispute which are Extracted from the Sayings of the Holy Fathers and Select Philosophers

O God, who out of goodness, benevolence, charity, and mercy creates all things without preexisting matter and who gives them various forms without need for a helper or an assistant, I ask You, trusting in Your mercy and relying on Your exceedingly great compassion to extend help to me and open to me the doors of ideas that have been previously shut for me, so that I can refute noxious opinions and show the falsehood of reprehensible beliefs with the words I bring from Your spiritual saints and divine virtuous ones, for You are true in answering prayer and accepting intercession, even though I have transgressed Your commandments.

Some people claim that human affairs are determined by the stars and that they are the cause of their joys and sorrows. Another party believes that God, may He be exalted, is the cause of evil just as He is the cause of good. Another group attributes human affairs to chance and denies the Creator's providence and foreknowledge. These groups closely examine the differences in people's circumstances: length and shortness of life, poverty and wealth, health and illness. They say, "Why are they not equal and why do they not receive here [in this world] the honor and shame they deserve? Why are some things the opposite of what logic dictates, such as a good

person beset with afflictions and an evil person blessed with luxury?" Necessity requires a refutation of what they claim and a response to what they ask, as far as possible.

We say that it is agreed that God, may He be exalted, is good, wise, and powerful. The evidence for His goodness is His bringing existent things out of nothing into existence. The evidence for His wisdom is His perfecting them—if anyone wants to have deeper knowledge of this, he should read Galen's *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*.[11] The evidence for His power is His joining opposites in bringing them into being. If this is so, then the mind cannot accept that He created something for which there is no need, because such does not come from someone wise. Now, He also created the intellect, and so if the guidance of human affairs is delegated solely to the stars, then His creating [the intellect] would have been pointless. The falsehood of this is proven; therefore the guidance of human affairs is not attributable to the stars but, rather, to the intellect centered within humans.

It is manifestly clear that humans are rational and every rational being is able to do what it chooses, so humans are able to do what they choose. (This is a syllogism of the first figure, which is made up of two affirmative universal premises.) So if they are able to do what they choose, then it is false that their movements are caused by the stars.

If you were to ask, "What can people do?" I would respond: "Virtues and vices." Aristotle attests to this in his *Ethics*,[12] where he says that the things that we must learn [before] we do them are the things that we learn while doing them.[13] If we learn to refrain from pleasures, then we become chaste, and if we become chaste we refrain from pleasures. In Book 3 of the *Physics*, which attests to the intellect in actuality, he says: "There are three kinds of agents: nature, craft, and intellect.[14] Nature produces substance, craft produces limited accidents that are subservient to nature, and the intellect also produces accidents, except that they are loose [, not subservient to nature]."[15] These accidents are the virtues and the vices. Also, the nature of the possible exists,* and most philosophers openly admit to this. It is also acknowledged that thought and reflection exist in a person, and so if the stars had agency and the action of the stars were deterministic, then the nature of the possible would be eliminated and there would be no need for thought and reflection, and this is absurd.

I will present the statement of two spiritual philosophers, Saint Gregory of Nyssa and Saint John of Damascus, about how we are able to perform certain actions without there being any cause for them other than ourselves.

* That is, not everything is determined: there is such a thing as the possible, which may or may not be realized.

They said: "Those who argue against human agency claim that absolutely everything that exists is caused either by the Creator, by necessity, by fate, by nature, by chance, or by its coming into being of itself. God's action is creating the individual instances of the substance and governing them by His foreknowledge. The action of necessity is a motion that remains the same. The action of fate is the completion of things by necessity's decree, because fate also belongs to necessity. The action of nature is generation and corruption, plants and animals. The action of chance is the unexpected thing that occurs rarely—for them, the definition of chance is that it is the coincidence of two things whose occurrence by choice results in something that was not intended, such as a person who digs a grave to bury a dead man and finds treasure in it. The person who put the treasure in that place did not do it so that the grave digger would find it, and the one who found it did not dig in the ground in order to find treasure but, rather, did it in order to bury a dead man. From these two actions together, something occurred that neither of the two had intended. The action of that which comes into being of itself are the accidents that happen to an irrational animal and to that which is inanimate, neither through nature nor through craft. A person's actions cannot be attributed to God, as some of them are wicked and unjust, nor are they necessary things because they never remain the same, nor are they among the actions of fate because that which is caused by fate is necessary, nor are they actions of nature because the actions of nature are plants and animals, and they are also not by chance because they are not things that happen rarely and unexpectedly, and they are also not things that happen of themselves, because those accidents occur in things that are inanimate or in animals that are irrational. Thus it remains that a person is the cause and creator of his own action."[16] If this is so, then it is not possible for the stars to have agency. This should be sufficient. With God is abundant grace.

As for God not being the cause of evil, as those ignorant people claim, evidence for this is that eminent philosophers acknowledge that evil is the opposite of good, that they are two genera, and that opposites do not arise from one another, as health does not come from sickness and black does not come from white. Rather, the generation of opposites occurs through the transformation of states into their opposites as long as what opposes them is not in the way of possession and absence. Should the opposition be in the way of possession and absence, then one [opposite] does not get transformed into the other.* They agree upon all this. They also agree that the

* To put this in simpler language, in order for an object to acquire an opposite characteristic its accidental qualities must change. Thus, in order for a white object to become black it must be repainted; in order for a nearby object to become distant it must be moved away, etc. The only exception to

Creator, may He be exalted, is good and they deduce this from His generosity, wisdom, eternity, power, and self-sufficiency. These essential attributes of His cannot be said to be evil. So, if God is good, evil cannot come from Him, according to the previously accepted principle.

How fitting is what the saint and divine philosopher Dionysius said: "Evil is not from good and if it were, then it would not be evil."[17] He also said: "Just as it is not a characteristic of fire to cool, likewise it is not a characteristic of good to beget evil."[18] Our Lord and God Jesus Christ testifies to the impossibility of opposites generating opposites when He says: "A good tree shall not be able to bear wicked fruit."[19] The aforementioned saint also said: "Since it is the nature of good to restore and it is of the nature of evil to corrupt, then nothing that exists is from evil. Indeed, [evil] itself is nonexistent because it is evil to itself, and if this is the case, then evil is not entirely evil but rather it has a share of the good by which it exists."[20] The evidence for this is that killing is evil because it is the corruption of what God brought into being and from this perspective it is nonexistent, while it is existent insofar as some imputed good has been added to it, since one does not kill except when he imagines that it will bring him some good. On account of this, the philosophers defined evil as a lack of discrimination in the faculties of reason.

If one were to say, "If evil cannot be from good, then neither can good be from evil and if this is the case then they are a pair of elements," we respond, "A pair cannot be a principle, but rather something singular is the principle of every pair."

If one then were to say, "So good and evil share a single principle?" we would respond, "It is completely impossible for two complete opposites to arise from something that is simple, single, undivided, indivisible, and unchanging." And if they say, "So let us concede then that their principle is like this, I mean divided, divisible, changing, and composite," we respond, "What is described in this way is not eternal but rather comes into being in time while we are talking about what is eternal. So it is necessarily the case that evil has no existence whatsoever."

If one were to say, "So from where does it come, since its appearance in the world is undeniable?" we respond with the response of the excellent theologian Saint Basil, "It comes about from laxity in practicing good."[21]

The philosophers have worthwhile questions about good and evil. Among them: Why does evil [sometimes] oppose evil, as cowardice opposes

this rule is the category of possession. When a thing owned by someone is (say) sold or stolen, there is no change in the accidental qualities of that thing. Thus, it does acquire the opposite characteristic (being not owned, as opposed to being owned), but this happens without transformation of accidental qualities.

temerity? And why does good [sometimes] oppose good, as aversion [to reason opposes] taking pleasure in reason? The response is that aversion to reason does not oppose taking pleasure in reason because their purpose is exactly the same.* Evil opposes evil precisely because it is undefined and is without form or purpose or activity. It opposes itself[22] through excess and lack.† On the other hand, good is defined, having a purpose, a form, and existence and so it does not oppose itself. Its definition is that it is the thing that is always sought by all. Others defined it by saying that it is what fashions and preserves all existent things. Another group of people defined it by saying that it is the substantivized will that chooses to bring good into being. Others defined it by saying that it is that which bestows good things out of spontaneous generosity, without cause.

One may say: If good opposes good, then evil has two opposites, good and evil, and this is against nature. The response: Nothing prevents a single thing from having two opposites according to two different senses, like hot and lukewarm to cold or like white and brown to black.

If one were to say, "Religions agree that the Flood and the burning of Sodom and the different kinds of disasters that afflict people and, in sum, death, are all from God, may He be exalted, and they are evils. You claimed that evil is not from God, but this is a contradiction," we would respond, "These things are not evil because good comes about through them. Saint Dionysius spoke well when he said: 'If angels were evil because they punish sinners, then those who punish sinners are also evil and the priests who keep the unclean from the Mysteries are evil.'"[23] What we have mentioned is sufficient even if it is brief. With God is abundant grace.

As for those who attribute human affairs to chance and deny the Creator's providence and foresight, their claim is refuted on the following basis. We have previously said that the action of chance occurs with what is rare and unexpected. Human affairs are not like this, and so they are not by chance. Evidence for this is that those who do good expect good and they encounter good, while those who do evil expect evil and receive evil. This is innately present in the intellect and no one denies this unless he is obstinate and not seeking the truth. Since the evidence that human affairs are not by chance stands, then providence and foresight are proven.

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* The sense here seems to be that the ascetic's aversion to intellectual pleasures has the same purpose as the philosopher's enjoyment of intellectual pleasures. That is, they both aim at "resembling God as much as humanly possible." (Cf. the second essay translated in this chapter.)

† The logic of the argument, ultimately based on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* II.1106b29–30, seems to be that because evil is the "undefined" (Greek: *to apeiron*), it lacks proper bounds and thus always exceeds itself or falls short of itself, opposing itself as a result.

Before we present testimony from the Fathers about providence, we need to mention the definition that they gave it. They said, "Providence is the Creator's care for creation." So its definition itself already announces that its existence is necessary because it is perverse to believe that the Creator does not always govern creation and guide it with the strictest guidance because that would indicate either complacency, indifference, or inability [to do so]. Even virtuous people are above these qualities, let alone the Creator of all existent things, intelligible and sensible, the source of goodness and the wellspring of every virtue. How could this belief not be the height of madness, when we see even irrational animals caring for their offspring with food, nurturing, and doing good according to their effort and ability? The spiritual philosophers said: "Evidence for providence includes the harmony of all creation and its good composition, its proportionality, its placement, its perfection, and its behaving according to its nature." Other proofs of [providence] are the features by which innumerable people are distinguished from each other such that they are not mistaken for each other, and this is most beneficial. The proof of this is that were it not for these features, one might marry his mother or a family member without knowing it and also one would not be prevented from committing injustice, theft, and murder since he would know that he could not be distinguished from others.

And so we say in brief: "When have the gates of righteousness been lifted?"*[24] If God did not govern the world, then He would neither reward nor punish. And if He neither rewarded nor punished, He would not be worshipped. And if He were not worshipped, then goodness and piety would not be sought after. This is a belief worthy of repudiation, rejected by the best people. Sense rejects it too and there is no truth to it. Proof of this is what we witness with our senses that people in their different creeds and languages and in their far-flung abodes and countries are in agreement about doing good and refraining from evil, in order to draw near to God, hoping for His good favor and fearing His punishment. They practiced this for thousands of years for no other reason than their being convinced by sense and reason of the truth of the Creator's providence for all. Thus the evidence has established the existence of providence, and by establishing its existence, belief in [divine] foreknowledge is also proven true, because providence is conditional upon foreknowledge. If foreknowledge were taken away, then providence would be taken away. This is what we have explained, and with God is abundant grace.

* This is a rhetorical question, meaning "when has righteousness disappeared from the world?" Ibn al-Fadl's point, as he explains in the sentences that follow, is that the very presence of righteousness in the world demonstrates the existence of God's providential care.

As for the reason for disparity among people in terms of shortness and length of life, this is in order to establish proof of the Resurrection, the Creator's providence for the world, and that souls have a world other than this one to which they go and receive recompense for their works, whether good or evil. Were it not for this, those who die as children or who are poor or who suffer temporary illness would have suffered extreme injustice, and poor governance would be attributed to the Creator in that He creates things and then uselessly destroys them, but His majesty is above this. So if people were equal in this matter, then they would reject the existence of another world, and they would deny the providence and foreknowledge of the Creator and would imagine that creation was something natural and not something voluntary.

We also say that disparity among people in terms of shortness and length of life is necessitated by providence. This is because if they were equal in lifespan, then it would have to be either short or long, and both of these options are objectionable. If it were short, then on account of its shortness they would not have complete knowledge of existent things, the search for truth, and the practice of virtue, and they would not rise from understanding created things to conceptualizing their Creator, which is the greatest happiness. As one of them said, "When we saw the heavenly spheres moving, they showed us that they necessarily have a mover. And since their movement is according to a single constant pattern, this necessarily meant that they have a single mover. If there were more than one, then each one of them would move with a motion different from the others and the motion would not be one. Moreover, [the mover's] setting [the spheres] in motion is itself motionless[25] because if the mover of the spheres had motion, then we would have to look for a cause for its motion, and this would go on without end. Moreover, the mover is not a body because, if the mover of the spheres had a body, then its power would be finite. Since the mover of the spheres is unmoved, it is proven that its power is infinite, and so if its power is infinite, it does not have a body. On account of this, it is incorruptible and eternal, and so it is understood from what is said above that the mover of the spheres is one, unmoved, bodiless, having infinite power, incorruptible, and eternal. This is none other than God, may He be exalted."[26] This is something that a child could not deduce. [And additionally, if life were short,] they would not be able to reproduce and ensure the propagation of the species. The creation of the intellect would have been in vain, and likewise too the senses, and in this is no small harm. God is far loftier and more glorious than having the corrupt providence and poor foresight that these things would imply.

And if [people's life] were long, they would postpone virtue until [just

before] the moment of death, even though they would hardly[27] do any [virtuous deeds] anyway on account of their strong denial of the world to come and their addiction to pleasure and corruption. If they did any good, it would not be out of love of good but, rather, out of proximity to death. Thus it would occur by compulsion and not by choice and what is done by compulsion is not a virtue. The danger resulting from this second option has also been made clear.

So equality in length of life is not something proper and beneficial, and if equality is not beneficial, then what is beneficial can only be inequality, and inequality means disparity, so disparity is beneficial and its benefit is clear. That is, through it one is guided toward [an understanding of] providence and the Resurrection, and thus does good abundantly. Then also because he knows that the time of death is not determined, he will stay on guard from evil, since even as a child one is not safe from it, let alone when one is an adult. And if staying in this world is beset with sorrows and is soon to pass away and the Resurrection is awaited, then we should not envy one whose life is long and we should not lament one who dies in childhood. What we have mentioned is sufficient. With God is abundant grace.

As for the cause of disparity in people's circumstances in terms of poverty and wealth, and why they are not equal in these respects, it is also clear. If they were equal in wealth, they would also reject the Resurrection and the Creator's providence. Society would cease functioning, and no one would be motivated to be a physician, a weaver, a tailor, a farmer or to pursue any other craft, as this is difficult, and thus their evils would multiply. If they were equal in poverty, then miserliness, impotence, and poor foresight would be attributed to the Creator, and He is far above these things. Now that equality has been proven false, in its being proven false disparity, which is its opposite, is proven, since one of the two must be the case.

The benefits of disparity are not hidden. They include evidence of the Resurrection and providence, the possibility for people to act in the world, and the possibility for virtue to be performed both in wealth and in poverty: in wealth, by doing good to the weak, and in poverty through patience and thankfulness. To the degree that the weak suffer from their weakness, entrance into the Kingdom is made easy for them, and to the degree that the rich enjoy their riches, entrance into the Kingdom is made difficult for them. What we have mentioned is sufficient for the prudent, praise be to God.

As for the reason for disparity between people in terms of continuous health and illness, it is also something required by providence. This is because if people were equal in continuous health, they would also deny the Resurrection and providence and their evils would multiply. Evidence for

this is that if they saw every evil person persisting in health, they would reject the Creator's providential care for the world, and if they saw every good person persisting in health they would deny the Resurrection. This is a danger that cannot be denied. Also, if they were equal in continuous illness, then miserliness, impotence, cruelty, or poor foresight would be attributed to God and people would imagine that His activity is natural and not voluntary,* though He is more glorious than that. Death would be victorious over their offspring and destruction would come quickly to the species. People would be distracted by their illnesses from doing philosophy and legislating about things which, together with God's good favor, ensure their continuous existence in the world. The evil arising from this possibility has also become clear, and since equality in both matters, that is, continuous health and illness, is impossible, its opposite has been established, which is disparity.

The benefits of this disparity are not insignificant. Among them: confessing the Resurrection and providence and eagerness to do good on the part of both groups—on the part of the healthy because of the health God has graced them with, and on the part of the sick because of their patience and thankfulness for the illnesses with which they have been tested.

Not all the righteous live in ease and not all the wicked live in hardship, but rather, some of the righteous live in ease and some live in hardship. Likewise some of the wicked are in hardship and some are in ease. This is because, if all the righteous in this world lived in ease, then people would disbelieve in the Resurrection and in the recompense in the world to come. And also, if all the wicked in this world lived in hardship, then people would disbelieve in the Resurrection and the recompense there. However, some of the righteous here are also in hardship and some of the wicked here are in ease. This is necessary from several useful perspectives: one is as evidence of the Resurrection and of providence. Another is so that people would not do good out of love for good circumstances in this world instead of love for the good itself. Another is so that the virtuous, wise man might be distinguished from the ignorant, craven man. Another is freedom from gloating.†

We will say what Saint Gregory, bishop of Nyssa, said: "If the Creator, may He be praised, knows that the best thing for a good and virtuous person is that he be in hardship, and that if his condition improved, he would stray from doing good, then He would cause his hardship to persist for the sake of his well-being. Also, if He knows that if the persistence of an evil person's

* That is, people would imagine that God's actions flow from Him out of necessity (and are thus outside His control) and not because He wills them and controls them.

† That is, the righteous will not gloat over the fate of the wicked because they will know that even though they are righteous the same fate can befall them.

wealth will keep him away from many evils, and that if it ceased he would resort to murder, theft, and other very loathsome things, He will maintain it and increase it for him, also seeking his well-being."[28] Blessed be God who loves humans and desires them to be virtuous and righteous, resembling the One who has exceeding care and good providence for them. To Him be abundant thanks and praise always.

With God's help, we have presented what the Fathers have said about the aforementioned questions in this essay, hoping that we have accomplished the three virtues of instruction, namely, complete accuracy, perfection of meaning, and brevity in speech. We hope that it will be sufficient and rewarding for the intelligent, impartial, and prudent man and not for the obstinate and stubborn.

While we mentioned in this essay that God is unmoving, following the result of syllogistic reasoning,[29] the great father and divine philosopher Gregory the Theologian attributed motion to Him in his *Oration on the Nativity* when he said, "It was not sufficient for the Good to move only through self-intellection."[30] The commentators*[31] said: "We must understand movement in God, may He be exalted, in the best way. It is said that He moves not in the sense of indwelling, which is going into every place, and not in the sense of alteration, which is motion that moves toward the opposite while remaining in the same places, like health and illness, and not in the sense of modification, like the movement from one color to another, and not in the sense of transformation, such as vapor coming from water, and not in the sense of motion in space, which can be straight, circular, and spiral, resembling the continuous motion of serpents, and not in the sense of intellectual movement, of which there are three kinds: either towards the more excellent, or towards the more imperfect, or towards the middle, and not in the sense of the movement of the soul, which is the imagining of the intellect and body,† and not in the sense of natural movement, which is movement toward nutrition and growth. God, may He be exalted, absolutely does not move with any of these movements, unless we take spatial movements and understand them in a way appropriate to Him, may He be exalted. So we say that He moves with a straight movement since there is no deviation and no slant in the emergence of His actions, and all things come into being from Him. He moves in a spiral movement on account of the emergence of His actions and the permanence of what springs from them.[32] He moves with a circular motion since He encompasses the edges along with the center, like the sphere that contains everything that is within it,

* The commentator in question is the tenth-century bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Basil the Lesser, whose commentary of Gregory of Nazianzus's *Oration 38* Ibn al-Fadl is quoting here.

† That is, with both the mind and the senses.

and since everything goes back to Him as He is its cause. Saint [Gregory the Theologian] indicated this motion, I mean circular motion, when he says that the Good motionlessly moved Himself through self-intellection when existent things were not yet created. That is, when the Divine Intellect visualized its own essence and encompassed all existent things within it—which are what one group* claims are forms and patterns—He had no other desire than for His goodness to overflow and gush forth abundantly. We should know that the saint describes the Divine Nature in another place[33] as comprehending and intellecting itself." This is in brief what the saint and the commentators have said, and with God is abundant grace.

With this, we conclude this essay of ours. May God be thanked and praised and asked for good favor, in this world and the next, in his generosity and mercy.

B. An Essay by the Master Abu l-Fath ʿAbdallah ibn al-Fadl ibn ʿAbdallah, may God be pleased with him, Refuting Astrology

The proof that astrology is something demonic, as claims our great father among the saints John Chrysostom,[34] is that it contradicts what is required by the divine laws, is at odds with what has been proven by rational theory, and is incompatible with what is necessitated by philosophical definitions. We shall clarify this with the help of God, who is a universal substance with three individuals, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[35]

One [aspect] of this is that the astrologers are in agreement that mirth and taking pleasure in food, drink, marital relations, clothing, perfume, ease of life, and wealth are good fortune and that it is provided by Jupiter and Venus and for this reason they are called the two lucky stars. They consider the opposites of the things I have mentioned to be misfortune and consider their cause to be Saturn and Mars. For this reason they call them the two unlucky stars. This is a matter in which they do not contradict each other and which they cannot deny. If one were to examine this matter closely, however, one would find it to be in contradiction with the truth, since the philosophers agree that it is the virtues that are good fortune and vices misfortune. Moreover, you cannot acquire virtue without suffering and sorrow. Proof for this is that chastity, holding back anger, giving money to those in poverty, being truthful, loving justice, fasting, prayer, humility, returning good for evil are all virtues that a person cannot practice without difficulty and sorrow. This is no secret. One of the early authorities† said that sorrows are hidden within

* That is, the Platonists. The reference is to Plato's theory of Forms.

† Isaac the Syrian.

the virtues and so one who flees from them also flees from the virtues.[36] Now, if the fruit of the virtues is only picked from the tree of sorrows, then sorrows are not misfortune but rather good fortune, since they are the root and means of its production. And if, by this analogy, sorrow is good fortune, then the mirth opposing it is misfortune. This is the first aspect of their error.

The second aspect is [the following]. The philosopher is one who resembles God, praise be to Him, as much as humanly possible.* He cannot resemble God except through exercising the virtues. Exercising the virtues is not possible except through renouncing the world and casting aside all its trappings. One who renounces the world and everything in it has no wealth and pleasure, and in the opinion of those pathetic, misguided, deceptive astrologers, one who has no wealth and pleasure is unfortunate. So [in their view] the philosopher who resembles God is unfortunate, and one who is not a philosopher but has abundant pleasure, whom Galen in his *Book of Ethics*[37] places at the level of worms and pigs, and who is far from God is fortunate. This is one of the most repulsive things that can be said.

The third aspect [is the following]. The philosophers claim that in the human person there are three souls and that the soul has three parts, the most noble of which is the rational soul, which possesses knowledge and reason.† It is located in the brain and it is through it that a human resembles God and the angels. Through it also the human person is [truly] human and it is this [part of the soul] that does not die. As for the other two souls, one of them is located in the heart and the other in the liver. The one that is in the heart is the irascible soul, and the one that is in the liver is the appetitive soul. The irascible soul is more sublime than the appetitive soul. Both these souls are found in animals, and they decay with the corruption of the body. When a human person follows these two souls, he resembles animals, but for the astrologers he is fortunate because he is wholly devoted to pleasure. When he subdues [these two souls] and follows the laws of the rational soul and resembles his Creator and His angels as much as possible, he is unfortunate according to [the astrologers] because he is cut off from pleasure. Consequently, [they consider] people who resemble animals to be fortunate and people who are close to the angels to be unfortunate and so the matter devolves to the point that the angel is more wretched than the beast. We seek protection in God from such an evil belief!

The fourth aspect: Reason, whose excellence is placed within us, would

* Ibn al-Fadl is citing one of the traditional definitions of philosophy, which ultimately goes back to Plato's *Theaetetus* 176b.

† The notion of the tripartite soul goes back to Plato's *Republic* 435b, 441e, and *Timaeus* 77b. This understanding of the soul was in general use among the Greek Fathers.

become unnecessary, because the decree of the stars is deterministic, such that a person becomes rich or poor, knowledgeable or ignorant, good or wicked [by this decree]. A person, therefore, could not be praised for virtue or blamed for vice. Moreover, one would not need a judge, a teacher, or a physician. One would not need to distance himself from wicked people or to draw near to righteous people. The commandments and prayers would be made useless. As a consequence of this, God, may His name be holy, who, as the religious laws and philosophers agree, is good and pure, would be the cause of evils because He is the one who created the stars and gave them these properties. God is far above this.

The fifth aspect: They believe that a person only dies when the two lucky stars lose their ascendancy and the two unlucky stars take their place. However, the givers of the divine laws and the philosophers are in agreement that the happiness of every righteous person begins with separation from this deficient body because it is then that one is freed from proximity to the animals and becomes attached to spiritual beings. All of this is sufficient for a rational person, and glory to God alone. The essay is complete, through God's guidance.

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Chapter 8

The Noetic Paradise

كتاب الفردوس العقلي

Alexander Treiger

The Noetic Paradise (or *The Paradise of the Mind*, in Arabic *al-Firdaws al-ʿaqli*) is an anonymous treatise on the spiritual life, unique among the texts included in this volume in that it was originally written in Greek and not in Arabic.[1] Since the Greek original of this treatise is lost, it is only through the Arabic translation that we have access to this otherwise unknown masterpiece of Greek patristic literature. The treatise is still unpublished in Arabic.[2] It is presented here to the English reader for the first time.

We do not know who authored this treatise. In some manuscripts it is attributed to Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335–ca. 394) or to John of Damascus (d. ca. 750); however, neither attribution is credible, and the former is chronologically impossible, as the text cites several later authorities. The text was undoubtedly written by a Chalcedonian author and seems to have originated in one of the monasteries of Palestine.[3] It is keen on citing authorities from Palestine as well as Sinai, such as Dorotheus of Gaza and John Climacus and clearly builds on the tradition of ascetic theology characteristic of sixth- and seventh-century Palestinian monasticism.[4]

Since Dorotheus of Gaza, who apparently died in the 570s or the 590s,[5] and John Climacus, who probably lived in the mid-seventh century,[6] are already cited in the *Noetic Paradise* as saints, it is unlikely that the text was written before the year 700. Though the text is silent on any events or conditions specific to the Islamic period, there is nothing improbable about its having been composed in Greek after the Islamic conquest, most likely in the eighth century. That there was keen interest, in Palestine, in Orthodox Christian ascetic literature in Greek until at least the end of the eighth century is evident from the famous Greek translation of the works of Isaac the

Syrian, produced by the monks Abramius and Patricius at the monastery of Mar Saba ca. 800.*[7]

The *Noetic Paradise* was probably translated into Arabic in the region of Antioch after the Byzantine reconquest of the city in 969.[8] Christian Arab refugees from Palestine, fleeing Fatimid persecution, could have brought a Greek manuscript of this text from one of the Palestinian monasteries (or private libraries) to Byzantium.† In fact, the subsequent period, especially the eleventh century, saw a rapid expansion in translation activity, in the region of Antioch, of patristic works from Greek into Arabic.‡[9]

It is not uncommon for the Fathers of the Church to use an allegorical framework for an ethical treatise. Thus, John Climacus's *Book of the Ladder* employs the Biblical image of Jacob's ladder leading to heaven as such a framework. The *Noetic Paradise* is constructed around an allegory based on the story of the Fall. The "paradise" referenced in the title of the treatise is the noetic and angelic realm out of which the human *nous*, or mind, was expelled after the Fall. The author draws a complex analogy: just as the human body was expelled out of the bodily paradise, so was the human *nous* expelled out of the noetic paradise, wherein before the Fall it had been glorifying God on a par with angels. Just as the cherub with a flaming sword prevents the body's return to the bodily paradise,[10] so also the flaming sword of sensory concerns and passions prevents the mind's return to the noetic paradise. The text then embarks on a complex analysis of virtues and vices, compared respectively to the trees of the noetic paradise and to the Biblical thorns and thistles brought forth by the earth after the Fall.[11] It delineates the ways in which one ought to "till" the earth of one's heart, cultivating the virtues and combating the vices, in order to have one's *nous* purified and readmitted to the noetic paradise.

The doctrine of a "double Fall" presented in this text is intriguing and quite unique. It is true that some Church Fathers (for instance, the *Macarian Homilies*, Anastasius of Sinai, and John of Damascus) and later some Byzantine authors (notably the eleventh-century theologian Niketas Stethatos) occasionally do refer to a "double paradise": one earthly, and the other noetic or spiritual.[12] "Double paradise" would, of course, presuppose a "double Fall," yet our text seems to be unique in discussing the noetic aspect of this double Fall in any detail.

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* Over the course of the ninth century, in the same monastery, an Arabic and a Georgian translation of the works of Isaac the Syrian were prepared as well.

† The Fatimids, an Ismaili Shiʿi dynasty that ruled North Africa and Egypt, conquered Palestine in 969.

‡ ʿAbdallah ibn al-Fadl (chapter 7 above) was the most prolific translator of that period and a prominent theologian in his own right.

Like other works of Orthodox ascetic theology, the *Noetic Paradise* owes much to the fourth-century theologian Evagrius (d. 399), who developed a highly influential understanding of ascetic life. Tilling the earth of one's heart (an expression borrowed from the *Macarian Homilies*)[13] corresponds to what Evagrius calls the "practical" stage of the ascetic life (*praktike*). Following Evagrius, the *Noetic Paradise* affirms that this practical stage leads to the dispassionate state of the mind, called *apatheia* (translated literally into Arabic as *ʿadam al-alam*; "lack of passions"). This dispassionate state leads to the "gnostic" stage (*gnostike*), culminating in a contemplation (*theoria*) of the light of the Holy Trinity, which according to Evagrius is the goal of Christian life.

Elaborating on this idea, the *Noetic Paradise* argues that once purified from the passions the *nous* becomes united with God's light. A striking passage, translated below, even argues that the minds of the saints are united with God's very nature, so that the miracles performed by them are performed in virtue of this union and hence should be properly attributed to God. In order to articulate this idea, the author often uses the image of the *nous* as a polished mirror in which God's light is reflected. This image is only very infrequently found in Evagrius but is more prominent in the writings of other theologians such as Gregory of Nyssa, as well as in the Syriac tradition.[14]

The *Noetic Paradise* is preserved in some thirty Arabic manuscripts dating from the twelfth to the nineteenth century and kept in a number of libraries in the Middle East (including several copies in both Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai and the Monastery of Our Lady of Balamand in Lebanon), as well as in Europe and Russia. The following translation is based on MS Beirut, Bibliothèque Orientale 483, with some corrections based on Sinai ar. 483 (the oldest known manuscript of the treatise, dating to the year 1178).[15] The translation includes four representative samples from different parts of the work, dealing with the allegorical framework of the text, the ethical methodology, the definition of perfect faith, and the various types of contemplation (*theoria*), including spiritual contemplation, which leads to union with God's light.[16]

Translation

A. From Chapter 1

The Holy Gospel calls the human heart earth,* because God, may He be

* The reference is apparently to the Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:1–23; Mark 4:1–20; Luke 8:1–15).

praised, created the first-fashioned Adam, making his body from the same four elements out of which He created all beings (namely, fire, air, earth, and water), while his spirit is heavenly, invisible, living, and noetic, made in God's image and likeness.

In the earth of Adam's heart God planted the trees of all the virtues, which are God's inherent qualities, and commanded him to till and cultivate the paradise of his heart, preserving it and delighting in its spiritual, noetic fruits, like the angels. His *nous* (mind), which is his invisible "hidden man,"[17] is God's image and likeness. His heart had the trees of the virtues planted in it, and the Creator commanded him to till the earth surrounding them and to preserve them. His body, which is his "manifest man," was placed in the eastern, sensory* paradise, to till it and to enjoy its sensory fruits.

When the tempter† deceived him and incited him to enjoy sensory things and to desire to become like a god, he disobeyed God's commandment and disregarded the value of obedience. His body turned to indulging in sensory pleasures and gluttony, like the irrational beasts, and became equal to them. This is why it was expelled and banished from the eastern, sensory paradise to this earth, and the earth was commanded to bring forth thorns and thistles for it. Other predicaments, too, affected his body, leading ultimately to bodily death caused by disobedience to the Creator.

Likewise, his *nous* gave in to the desire to become like a god. This indicates that it had been affected by the vice of pride, through which the tempter caused it to fall, deceived it, and blinded it, rendering it incapable of beholding the angelic light, as it had previously. The tempter made it conform instead to his own opinion and intention. This is why Adam's *nous* was expelled from the noetic paradise inhabited by angels—that is to say, from the intelligible world wherein it had been accompanying them and like the angels praising and glorifying the Creator without ceasing, delighting like them in beholding the divine beauty, and sustaining itself with the fruits of the abiding noetic virtues. The door was shut behind [Adam's *nous*], and it was banished to the "earth" of passions and sensory visions. This "earth" began bringing forth the "thorns" of the vices and the "thistles" of the passions for it. Other predicaments, too, affected his *nous*, leading ultimately to the death of the soul caused by the sin of disobedience, which alienates one from God, committed as a result of transgression.

The cherub with a rotating, flaming sword in his hand was installed to guard the entrance to the eastern, sensory paradise, preventing Adam's

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* Throughout this text, "sensory" means what we would call today bodily or physical.

† That is, Satan.

"manifest man"* from entering it. This was done in order that he might recognize the value and importance of obedience and the bitterness and baseness of disobedience and might repent of his actions. Perhaps, when he has been overcome by the sorrows of dwelling on this earth to which he was banished and has tasted the toils of procuring what is necessary for his sensory existence, he will recall the pleasures of effortless sojourn in paradise and weep over his transgressions.

Similarly, the door to the heavenly, noetic paradise was shut behind his *nous*. With a flaming sword in its hand, the preoccupation with sensory concerns was installed to guard it. This "sword" provides the *nous* with ever-changing thoughts with every one of its rotations. This sword is the obstacle set before the *nous*, either preventing it from acting virtuously or corrupting virtuous action. The sword is the love of pleasures and pride. It prevents the ascent of Adam's "hidden man"† to the noetic paradise. This was done so that the *nous* might recognize the loftiness and magnificence of being humble and submitting to the Creator's commandment and the bitterness and baseness of pride and so that it might repent of its evil deeds. Perhaps, when his *nous* has experienced the concerns associated with the earth of the passions to which it was banished and has tasted the toils of procuring the nourishment of the noetic virtues, it would recall the pleasures of the noetic world and repent of, and weep over, its disobedience. Indeed, it is disobedience that made man's *nous* inherit companionship with beasts instead of companionship with angels, to see the image of impure actions instead of beholding the divine beauty, to engage with evil thoughts instead of glorifying the Creator on par with angels, and to sustain itself on the lethal fruits of vice instead of the life-giving fruits of virtue.

The flaming sword always prevents the *nous* from entering the paradise that brings forth virtue, as we see happening with love of God and love of the neighbor, the two commandments which are the perfection of all the virtues. Whenever the *nous* yearns to love God, to converse with Him in pure prayer, and to behold Him in spiritual *theoria*, the sword always distracts it with thoughts concerning sensory matters, love of pleasures, infatuation with visible things, contemplating notions associated with sensory crafts, images of evil actions, and legions of passions determined to get in the way of this virtue. Also in the case of love of the neighbor, if it happens that the neighbor has caused one any sensory harm, the sword distracts one's *nous* with thoughts of anger, grief, and slander and raises against it legions of passions to prevent it from loving the neighbor with perfect love as the *nous* was commanded.

* That is, his body.

† That is, his *nous*.

The case is similar with all the other virtues. Whenever the *nous* intends to perform good deeds, one finds legions of thoughts hindering it from them. This is because these passions afflicted man as an accident,* and they are the thorns and the thistles that the earth of his heart was obliged to bring forth as a result of his disobedience to the Creator. Thus, by divine judgment man's heart brought forth the accident of the thorns of the passions, for he had failed to recognize the magnitude of the grace given him gratuitously without effort. This is why he was commanded to eat the bread of virtue in the sweat of his brow, with extreme toil and effort.

The virtues are essences† made by the Creator, may He be exalted, to exist always in the human *nous*. As for the passions, they are accidents affecting these virtues, in the same way accidental rust affects the pure essence of a polished mirror, obscuring its light and purity. This is why man must take pains to uproot, first of all, the thorns of the vices that envelop and obscure the trees of the virtues. Then he must force himself to remove the accidental rust of the passions that affects the original essence of the virtues. He must clean the soil from the stones and weeds of the passions and till it thoroughly with a special instrument. This instrument is fasting, prayer, virginity, keeping vigils, service, silence, abstinence, avoiding people's company, alertness, watchfulness of the mind, weeping, self-control, sleeping on the ground, and accepting suffering. He must plow it with the noetic plow, for the Lord says: "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven."[18]

B. From Chapter 3

The virtues are present in us as we have described above, except that they appear in every human being in a partial way, to the degree that he has tilled his soul. This is why when the Word of God, the Creator of all, united Himself with our nature and sanctified it, He ordered us to perform His commandments, for they illumine the eye of the soul and cause the virtues to sprout forth. God embellished man with the virtues and exalted him above all other existing creatures by means of a rational intellectual soul, made in the image of God—insofar as it is invisible, uncircumscribable, abiding, and not perishing and has free rein over itself‡—and is in God's

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* "Accident" is used here and below in the Aristotelian sense of a quality or a characteristic that inheres in the essence of a thing.

† This term is also used in the Aristotelian sense.

‡ These are all divine qualities shared by the rational soul. It is in this sense that the rational soul is created in the image of God.

likeness—insofar as it includes all the virtues and is dispassionate.*

Man's disobeying the commandment caused rust to appear on the essences of virtues, the rust of the vices being an accident by which the light of the virtues is obscured. In this way, the likeness of God was lost. Yet, through obeying the commandment and taking pain to uproot vice, the rust covering the virtues is removed, the light of the virtues reappears completely, and their original essence is restored. It is in this sense that the wise Maker says: "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven, for He is perfect,"[19] instructing us to strive for ultimate perfection in all the virtues.

First, in the virtue of faith: Everyone believes what he sees and hears but doubts what is hidden from him. Yet to have perfect faith is to believe in the existence of God, the Creator of all things, both visible and invisible, and to believe that God is present in them all and sees the thoughts of rational creatures, the motions of animal natures, and the growth of vegetation, so that no notion, or movement, or action of any of His creatures is hidden from Him. One must also believe with certainty that there exist not only visible but also invisible goods.

Second, in the virtue of hope: Everyone hopes to obtain that which one knows through the senses, such as hoping to benefit from crops, to derive profit from trade, and the like. Yet to have perfect hope is to hope with complete certainty to obtain the delights of the world to come and life everlasting and to enjoy the profits of seeking virtue, in the same way as one will also receive punishment for succumbing to vice.

Third, in the virtue of love: Everyone loves those who love him and honors those who honor him. Yet to have perfect love is to love those who hate, insult, and intend to harm you.

Fourth, in the virtue of fear: Everyone fears rulers and their punishments and is afraid of poverty and afflictions in this world. Yet to have perfect fear is to fear God alone and to be scared to fear anything more than God.

Fifth, in the virtue of discernment: Everyone exercises discernment in matters of one's livelihood and uses deliberation in worldly crafts and trades, choosing those that bring profit and avoiding those that bring loss. Yet to have perfect discernment is to discern the benefits accruing through heavenly virtues and to discern the notions, whisperings, and wiles of the demons and to avoid them. One must also be able to distinguish between natural rational thoughts and misleading negative visions and to differenti-

* Like other patristic works, the *Noetic Paradise* draws a distinction between God's image and God's likeness. Only God's likeness was lost as a result of the Fall, but not the image of God, which cannot be destroyed.

ate between good and natural notions as well as divine and profitable ideas, which are to be upheld, and impure consequences, which are to be shunned.

Sixth, in the virtue of mercy: Everyone has mercy on one's own servants and family. Yet to have perfect mercy is to have mercy on those whom one does not know and on every person without exception.

Seventh, in the virtue of gentleness: Everyone is gentle with those superior in status and with one's relatives and friends. Yet to have perfect gentleness is to be gentle, with wholehearted intent, with those inferior in status and with those who are younger in age or in rank, when they revile, insult, and harm you.

Eighth, in the virtue of justice: Everyone exercises justice in judging one's neighbor's affairs. Yet to have perfect justice is to exercise justice in judging oneself in all things and to be fair in how one uses one's external and internal senses, natural faculties, and properties of rational and animal virtues.

Ninth, in the virtue of chastity: Everyone abstains from that to which one has no access, either due to the weakness of one's nature or to the inability to obtain the thing in question. Yet to have perfect chastity is to abstain even though one has access to that thing and is able to obtain it.

Tenth, in the virtue of courage: Everyone is capable of acting boldly in frightening situations and exercising courage in afflictions when one seeks worldly gains or material possessions. Yet to have perfect courage is to be courageous in combat against one who gets in the way of one's pursuit of the virtues and whose legions are prepared for battle always, day and night, and in every place* and to act boldly in difficult situations, seeking to obtain everlasting gains.

C. From Chapter 5

The first aspect of perfect faith—the tree of faith in having conviction in one's faith in God—is to believe that God the exalted is the Creator of both kinds of creatures: the noetic, spiritual, invisible, and intelligible on the one hand and the bodily, material, visible, and sensory on the other.† He is the cause of all created things, He is present in them, and He sees both their external actions and movements and their internal notions, thoughts, and ideas. He encompasses all creatures but is encompassed by none of them. He cannot be said to dwell in any particular place in such a way that other places would be empty of Him; rather, He is the one who fills all created things. His essence is incomprehensible, and so is His nature. He cannot be

* That is, against the devil.

† This echoes the Nicene Creed: "maker of all things, visible and invisible."

defined, imagined, and described, for should this be the case, the mind that defined Him would be greater than Him, God forbid. Nay, creatures cannot define their Creator, nor can a fashioned being see its Fashioner, just as it is impossible for a painted image to define its artist, though both of them are created beings.

It is true that in the multitude of His tender mercy and in His abundant goodness He made Himself known to His prophets and to the righteous among His people, who then had the boldness to describe His appearance and to define Him; yet it was only by virtue of His condescension to them that He made the image of His glory present to their minds.* As for His simple spiritual essence, no one has ever seen it, as His eternal Son said: "No one has seen God at any time."[20] This is why, when the eternal Son, the only-begotten Word of God willed to save our life from corruption, He united Himself to our nature, veiling with it the essence of His divinity.

One must also believe that God's promises, warnings, commandments, and sayings, uttered by Himself in person or through the tongues of His prophets and saints are truer than what can be seen with one's eyes, and shall be fulfilled and come true. One must be certain that these are the words of the Creator, which will abide forever, even after heaven and earth pass away and are transformed.†

One must also believe that Christ, who is God over all things, has united Himself with His saints and speaks through their tongues, teachings, and all their sayings and commandments, as He said concerning those who bear witness‡ for His sake: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom which your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist,"[21] and also "the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you,"[22] and He also said, "he who believes in Me, even greater works than these he will do,"[23] "for without Me you can do nothing."[24] Similarly, the apostle Paul, His disciple, says: "You seek a proof of Christ speaking in me"[25] and "if anyone has faith in the Lord, let him believe that my commandments are the commandments of Christ."[26]

Just as we have sure belief that the miraculous deeds ascribed to the saints are in reality performed through them by God, who is united with them, so also we believe that their sayings, actions, and teachings belong to Christ, the King of Glory. When the rays of the sun fall upon a mirror

* That is, by virtue of the Incarnation. The expression "the image of His glory" refers to the Son, who is the image of the Father.

† That is, transformed into a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1). The wording in Arabic may be influenced by Qurʾan 14:48.

‡ Or become martyrs.

of pure glass, it becomes both itself filled with light and also lets the light united with it penetrate it and sends it on, as if competing with the sun itself, towards the person sitting behind it, and he also becomes illumined with this light. That person then cannot say, "The mirror's light enveloped me," but he must say, "The sun's light, which is united with the mirror, shines upon me." When fire envelops iron and becomes united with it, and someone gets burned by it, he cannot say, "The heat inherent in the nature of iron burned me." Nay, he is certain that the action of burning and giving light belongs exclusively to the fire united with iron. In like manner is the divine nature united with the minds of the saints, as the sun is united with a mirror and fire with iron. Therefore, the miracles performed by the saints, as well as their teachings and instructions, are to be attributed to God, who is united with them. According to this analogy, the miracles and the teachings can only be attributed to the saints metaphorically, out of reverence and respect for them, for they have cleansed their souls, purified their senses, polished their minds with divine commandments, and have become like a polished mirror, receptive of divine radiance. In reality, however, one must believe with certainty that these miracles and teachings belong to God, who is speaking and acting through the saints.

D. From Chapter 17

Know that there are three kinds of *theoria* (contemplation): demonic *theoria*, material *theoria*, and spiritual *theoria*. Contemplating demonic *theoria* noetically defiles the mind and, acting in accordance with it, kills the mind noetically and corporeally. This type of *theoria* happens when the *nous* engages its internal senses—reflection, recollection, imagination, intuition, and sense-perception—in evil thoughts: fornication, debauchery, theft, gluttony, malice, deceit, wantonness, envy, spite, pride, mockery, slander, lust for power, hatred, conceitedness, seeking the approval of men, ostentation, lack of faith, jealousy, conspiracy, cruelty, judgmentality, backbiting, disdain, blame, despair, rebelliousness, anger, injustice, cowardice, discontentedness, disobedience, audacity, quarrelsomeness, laziness, vengefulness, acquisitiveness, sorrow, self-assuredness, arrogance, haughtiness, murder, corruption, love of pleasures, and the like. The *nous* becomes defiled by imagining them, as the Lord said: "Those thoughts come from the heart and defile it."[27] Yet if the *nous* also approaches them with the rest of its senses,* performs them, and carries them out in the body, they kill it noetically, for they alienate it from God, and alienation from God is death. In the same way, the prodigal

* The five "internal senses" mentioned above are meant.

son, who squandered his father's spiritual wealth in pursuit of such vices, was called dead, for his father says, "This my son was dead," that is, in sin, "and is alive again," that is, through repentance, "he was lost," that is, alienated from God, "and is found," upon returning to Him.[28]

Contemplating material *theoria* coarsens and binds the mind noetically, and acting in accordance with it kills the mind noetically and corporeally. This type of *theoria* happens when the *nous* engages its senses in the technical sciences—geometry, engineering, carpentry, and other crafts—in the worldly sciences, when they are pursued for earning money and gaining social status, in various worldly professions and trades, in earthly concerns, love of material possessions, and in general in every worldly pursuit for the sake of the body that provides no benefit to the soul. Apostle Paul calls the wisdom of this world, the sagacity of its people, their behavior in it, and their various stratagems "foolishness" in the eyes of God.[29] The *nous* becomes coarsened and bound by imagining them, as the Lord said: "If anyone does not hate his family, yes, and himself also, he cannot be My disciple."[30] This indicates that all worldly matters bind the swiftly moving *nous* when it reflects upon them, wishes them, or is preoccupied with them. Yet if the mind also approaches them with the rest of its senses, seeks to acquire them, performs them, and carries them out in the body and in the senses, they choke it, as the Lord says: "The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word of truth and its teaching, and one becomes unfruitful."[31] This is because the thorns of worldly matters choke the divine teachings, while the thistles of earthly concerns cloud and coarsen the purity of the subtle mind.

Contemplating spiritual *theoria*, by contrast, purifies the mind noetically, and acting in accordance with it gives life to the mind noetically and corporeally. This type of *theoria* happens when the *nous* engages its senses in beholding the Creator through the beauty of His creatures, in their comely forms and marvellous arrangement. In doing this, the *nous* uses the following analogy: if these creatures' forms and shapes are such that their beauty and comeliness elevate the minds and exalt the souls, how much more must their Creator incomparably surpass them in comeliness and beauty.

Spiritual *theoria* also includes contemplating the Maker with one's imagination based on the beauty of His creations and being amazed at His immeasurable and inscrutable wisdom, which brought forth all existent things, both visible and invisible, from nonexistence into being. His wisdom produced them all, arranging and combining their disparate natures, and bringing out and assigning to every species of creatures a particular

feature proper to it, by which it is characterized. One also considers God's great power, whose magnitude cannot be described and whose action has no limit, which holds all creatures in its grip, preventing them from overstepping their boundaries. His power exercises providential care over all creatures by a mere gesture, a care that stretches from beings greatest in essence and significance to the smallest in size and the least significant. It watches over them all, may its power be exalted, embraces them all, and fills them all. [. . .]

When, as we have mentioned earlier, one employs one's noetic and sensory perceptions in contemplating all the creatures as we have described, one will glorify the majestic God in truth and without ceasing. God fills the heavens and the earth and all creatures. He is present in them all with His simple essence—no place is empty of Him. He dwells in all His creatures without being mixed with what is lower than Him, like the sun, which does not become defiled through shedding its light on mud. Just like the sun is, in virtue of the Creator's command, the light for the sensory beings, so God, may He be exalted, is the Light for noetic beings, such as angels and humans. He is the one who provides noetic and sensory creatures with life, light, movement, power, wisdom, understanding of what benefits them and what harms them, sense-perception, and other features suitable for their natures.

When one contemplates this, one will praise without interruption that Simple Essence, who is the cause of all essences and of all creatures, the elemental foundation of all elements, uncircumscribable with regard to place, incomprehensible to the mind, and ineffable to the power of speech. He becomes united, in the indescribable subtleness of His essence, with noetic essences—angels and humans (the latter are, however, both noetic and sensory)—to the degree that they have purified themselves for Him.

Whoever has reached an accomplished state of purity will participate in and partake of the Good, glowing with the sun's radiance like a crystal and pure glass, much like a mirror that is illumined by the sun's rays and its light, so much so that its rays become reflected in it and illumine what is behind it. (God, however, is much subtler than this analogy!) This is like the saints, who have some of their light reflected and illumine others. Others partake of the divine Good in a more deficient manner, to the degree that they have been slack in purifying and polishing their souls. Still others cannot serve as a source of light at all, nor experience it, like a mirror smeared with mud, which is neither penetrated nor illumined by the light of the sun. This happens because their soul is covered too densely with material passions.

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Chapter 9

Agathon of Homs

أغاثن مطران حمص

Alexander Treiger

Agathon, bishop of Homs (Emesa) in Syria, was born in Antioch and was named Iliyya (Elias). His nickname, "Ibn al-Ashall," means "son of a man with a withered hand," so we can assume that his father acquired this disability at some point in his life.[1] We do not know exactly when Agathon lived, but the likely time is between 1050 and 1150. This is because both his style of writing and his theological concerns are characteristic of the period after the beginning of the Great Schism (1054; see below), while the earliest manuscript of his only surviving work (to be discussed shortly) dates to 1178, so the work itself must have been composed prior to that.[2]

Agathon was an Orthodox Arab, bilingual in Arabic and Greek.[3] He must have received a thorough ecclesiastical education. His ability to cite the Church Fathers (Dionysius the Areopagite is his favorite) and his remarkable capacity for complex theological reflection are an eloquent testimony to his training. Despite this, however, he remained a layman for much of his life.[4] Probably on account of his fame as a theologian as well as, presumably, his social prestige in Antioch, a delegation from Homs appealed to him to become bishop of their city. He accepted the offer, regarding it as the will of God, and was ordained priest and bishop with the name Agathon. Later on, as a result of certain unspecified "blasphemies" and blatant canonical irregularities in his diocese as well as the moral apathy of the high clergy, which he criticizes in the strongest terms, he resigned his post. The text partially translated below is, essentially, an apology he wrote in the wake of his resignation. He is at pains to stress that his decision was not the result of a lack of knowledge about the nature of the priesthood and the episcopate. To prove this, he devotes the main part of the text to a series of complex theological reflections on the nature of priesthood, unparalleled in

its depth in all of Christian literature written in Arabic.[5] He also deals with a number of loosely related theological subjects, such as the interpretation of the divine names, anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the Old Testament (which he interprets as proofs of the Incarnation), the numerological significance of the number thirty (in canon law, the earliest age of ordination to the priesthood), and others.[6]

As mentioned above, some of Agathon's concerns are characteristic of the period after the Great Schism between the Eastern Patriarchates and Rome and hence offer circumstantial evidence for the dating of his apology.[7] Though he does not take up any of the principal subjects of Byzantine polemic against the Latins directly (such as the *filioque* or the use of unleavened bread), his insistance that all of Christian priesthood is "after the order of Melchizedek" fits in well with the dynamics of this polemic. In fact, it is precisely the idea that not only Christ's own priesthood but Christian priesthood in general is "after the order of Melchizedek" that served as a key argument for the Eastern practice of using leavened bread in the Eucharist, in imitation of Melchizedek's offering of (leavened) bread and wine to Abraham. Byzantine theologians similarly argued that Christ Himself must have used leavened bread during the Last Supper "after the order of Melchizedek," which, consequently—contrary to the popular Western assumption—could not have been a Passover meal.[8]

As mentioned above, one of the main reasons for Agathon's resignation was certain blasphemies uttered by fellow priests and bishops. We do not know what these blasphemies were, nor do we have any complementary source of information that would allow us to verify and accurately interpret Agathon's claims. What might be significant is that Agathon was an outsider in Homs. Moreover, while his native Antioch was under Christian (Byzantine, Armenian, and Crusader) domination for most of the period when he is likely to have lived, Homs was controlled by the Muslims.* It might therefore be that there was something about the local way of practicing Christian theology in Homs that seemed "blasphemous" to a Christian raised and trained in Antioch. Possibly this had to do with the way in which Christian theology was articulated in a Muslim environment, with certain conscious or unconscious "adaptations" made to render Christian ideas and practices palatable to Muslim ears. Unfortunately, we cannot say more than that.

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* Contacts across the border were nevertheless possible—and quite frequent in this time period. Thus, for instance, one of the works of the leading Arab Orthodox theologian in Byzantine Antioch ʿAbdallah ibn al-Fadl (chapter 7) was commissioned by a certain John, the bishop of Manbij in Muslim-controlled territory.

Agathon is particularly distressed by blatant disregard for basic norms of canon law in Homs and elsewhere in the Patriarchate of Antioch, particularly by the irregularities in the election and ordination of priests and bishops. He cites canonical decisions of the apostles and of the Church councils (especially of the Quinisext Council in Trullo in 692) to prove his point. He also laments the fact that it is always the wealthy who get elected to the priesthood and the episcopate, even if they are completely unfit for the task. Sadly, one can imagine that bribes (paid out both to Church officials and to Muslim authorities) must have played an important role in being elected to high ecclesiastical posts. This might be the subtext of Agathon's scathing criticism of some (unnamed) hierarchs who regard money as a blessing instead of a curse and spend their entire lives amassing wealth and indulging in all kinds of pleasure, in total disregard for the needs and the spiritual well-being of their flock. This text—translated here into English (in excerpts) for the first time—is therefore an eloquent defense of the norms of Christian canon law, as seen by a brilliant Arab Orthodox theologian of the Middle Ages.[9]

Translation

A. From the Introduction

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God.

The Book of Explication of the Faith and of the Mystery of Priesthood, compiled and written by Agathon the sinner . . .,[10] metropolitan of the city of Homs, known as Ibn al-Ashall; he offered it as an apology for his appeal to terminate his episcopal duties in the city of Homs.[11]

He said: What prompted me to write this book was the fact that a group of believers has been blaming me for my decision to terminate my episcopal duties in the city of Homs, may God protect it, to discontinue my ministry and residence in it, to turn my back on many of its dignitaries, and to dissociate myself from them. As these rebukes persist and have been causing me much grief, I consider it necessary to write a book in which I will prove my case and clear my name, so that people both near and far, both neighbors and strangers will read it and no one among the believers will have the slightest doubt about my [affair] or find fault with my [decision].

I shall begin by stating that I was not raised to be a priest, nor did I ever envision serving before the altar of God. I was neither intent on this nor found any of it to be appealing. I was blind regarding the ordinances of priesthood and ignorant of its exalted significance. When, however, the choice of the

people of Homs fell on my weakness and they sought me out in the city of Antioch, delegating a number of bishops, who were then present, and other dignitaries of the country, I acquiesced and accepted to be ordained. This was not done simply to grant their request and in recognition of the status of the assembly. [This was done] because both the assembly and myself accepted in good faith that their election of my unworthiness was in accordance with the religious laws and the ordinances of the holy canons and that they followed the practice of the pure disciples and the righteous fathers after them: that they nominated a group of people, of whom I was one, wrote the chosen names, and put them inside ballots of clay, imploring God with fasting, prayer, vigils, liturgies, and supplications to show what was best for them. Then, after all this, the ballot with my name came out, and this was accompanied by similar divine and spiritual matters, which are famous and well known and there is no need to explain or recount them here.

Moreover, their election of my unworthiness could not have been caused by fear or desire for any [extraneous] factor. Neither any worldly matters nor considerations of partisanship or favoritism [could have played into it], for I have neither relatives nor a patron in Homs. No one even knows me there in person, let alone more than that. For these and similar reasons that I have mentioned, I gave in and accepted [their request], in the hope that Christ our Lord would not forsake me, for the rank I was about to receive and the office of priesthood of which I was deemed worthy were not given to me in breach of the religious regulations or contrary to the ordinances of the apostles. I took confidence in the statement of the prophet David: "They slept their sleep and found nothing."[12]

However, once I arrived in Homs and was ordained priest and bishop of that city and I had to accept responsibilities that I did not deserve, this overwhelmed me greatly. I came to realize the exalted significance of priesthood and its mystery and the sublimity of the episcopal rank. This took my mind away and filled me with fear and trepidation. I devoted myself to the study of ecclesiastical books, the canons of the apostles and of the other fathers and teachers guided by the Holy Spirit. In doing this, I sought the salvation of my own soul, striving to learn the responsibilities of a person who occupies such an [exalted] office as myself, what sins he has to be on guard from, what are the conditions under which he will be asked [by God] strictly, and in what circumstances he can expect [from God] some leniency should he fall short of [fulfilling his duties]. What set me on this quest was the statement of Saint Paul the apostle in his first epistle: "Whoever has sinned without law shall perish without law, and whoever has sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."[13] This statement further increased the pain

of my heart and my preoccupation [with this matter, for it meant that] whoever is ignorant of his duties will not be excused but will be one of those who perish, while he who knowingly falls short of what is incumbent on him shall be judged. [. . .] I knew that in my deficiency I was not performing even a tiny part of the responsibilities of the [episcopal] office. [. . .]

I decided to seek a stratagem to leave the pastoral care of the flock with which I had been entrusted. I thought about it ceaselessly, and nothing could distract or dissuade me from this. At the same time, I did not wish to do something that had no precedent among the fathers of the past nor to break the stipulations of the religious law. I therefore decided to explore and inquire whether I could find any of the righteous fathers who had the same desire and had performed what my soul intended to do—that is, leaving pastoral duties. I would then follow his example and release myself from what was beyond my capacity. I found that a number of pure sages had resigned from the episcopate, such as Gregory the Theologian,[14] Anastasius Patriarch of Antioch,[15] Narcissus Patriarch of Jerusalem,[16] and others who equal these in righteousness and holiness. On the other hand, I never heard of any wicked bishop who voluntarily gave up his post. [Having realized this] I thanked our Lord and Savior the Giver of good things for the assistance He granted to my weakness and for the charity He dispensed to my unworthiness, showing me the path that would open for me the gate of salvation.

As I was preparing to do this, certain grievous matters became known to me, and awful events happened in breach of religious laws, which made me anxious, causing me sadness and further strengthening my resolve to resign by any means necessary. These were sickening, disheartening, and upsetting reports about [certain] priests and bishops, some of which I knew to be true on the testimony of trustworthy people, while others I observed and heard myself. These [priests' and bishops'] blasphemies caused the angels of God and the powers of heaven to shudder. I witness and affirm this before Christ the Judge, who shall question me about them, but there is no way I can mention them in this book.

These circumstances, both corroborated by the testimony of trustworthy people and witnessed in person, made clear to me that those [priests and bishops], concerning whom I heard such reports, are [in reality] neither priests nor bishops. Moreover, the same is true for whoever concelebrates with them in the priestly office, for all those concelebrating with them must be deposed,[17] according to the statement of the apostles in Canon Eleven of the [*Apostolic*] *Canons*, which reads: "Whoever prays with a deposed priest as with a priest in good standing, let him and whoever prays with him be deposed." In Canon Twelve they also say: "If a deposed priest departs

to another city and the people of that city accept him as a priest, allow him to perform any priestly [duties], and concelebrate with him after learning of his true affair, let them too be deposed."[18] It is not for nothing that I say that these [priests and bishops] are deposed. To the contrary, this is absolute truth. Whoever must be deposed based on the verdict of the apostles and the other councils is, in fact, deposed, even if the church authorities in his time neglected to depose him.

I then inquired how these [priests and bishops] were appointed to the priesthood and episcopate: how these wretched people ingratiated themselves into this and competed for these [offices]. I searched the beginning of their career and found it to be even worse and more disastrous in how they transgressed the canons and violated the ordinances of religion. I realized that the fruit is in accordance with the root, as our Lord says in the Gospel: "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit."[19] Given that their fruits are these foul fruits, it is indeed impossible for their election to have proceeded in accordance with the required ordinances and laws. I also recalled the statement of the prophet Isaiah in the fifth ode:*[20] "Whoever did not learn righteousness on the earth will not do the truth."[21]

It became obvious to me that if I were to remain a bishop I would have only two choices: either concelebrate with these bishops and priests, in which case I would be, in effect, deposed too in virtue of my concelebration with them.† Since [in this case] I would necessarily be in this situation, I would not be a priest, and neither eucharistic offering nor prayer would be accepted from me. Were I to administer any priestly [duties] after that, this would constitute a grave sin and transgression, and I would irretrievably lead my soul to perdition.

I also contemplated terminating my functions as a priest along with the episcopacy, for I was unworthy of [priesthood]. At the same time, I was afraid of getting into a situation where I would violate the canons, for [canon law] says: "One shall not be chastised twice."[22] Additionally, I was to follow the example of the early fathers who fled leadership and governance of cities but did not strip themselves of priesthood.[23] In any case, I could see no other way but to follow through with my intention to terminate and resign from pastoral duties and leadership over the people [as their bishop].

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* The nine Old Testament songs ("odes") form the basis of the so-called "canons" sung during the Orthodox services of Matins, Compline, and some others. As correctly indicated by Agathon, the fifth ode is Isa. 26:9–19. Today, the actual Biblical odes are only read at Matins during Great Lent.

† Agathon never mentions the second possibility, hence his sentence is ungrammatical in Arabic. To reflect this, I maintain the same ungrammatical structure in English by translating the "either" without the "or."

This was, in my view, the safest path for me both in this life and in the life of the world to come.

B. From the Main Section, on Priesthood

With all the tribulations that befell me in these circumstances, I wish also to explain certain key things concerning priesthood and its ordinances, so that it will be obvious to the reader of this book that my decision to terminate my pastoral care for the people of Homs was not the result of ignorance of the meaning of episcopacy or blindness regarding its stipulations. To the contrary, this was the result of abundant research that I had conducted, religious zeal, divine fervor, and sure and certain knowledge. [. . .]

I say: Priesthood means becoming similar to God to the degree of one's ability, capacity, and actions.[24] This is the definition that Greek philosophers gave to philosophy when they said: "[Philosophy] means becoming similar to God to the degree of one's ability."[25] [. . .] The priests are those who, more than anyone else, devote themselves to becoming similar to God according to their abilities, because this obligation applies to them especially and belongs to them in truth, while it belongs to other people only metaphorically. Other people are [deiform] potentially, while if they become priests they become [deiform] in actuality. Were it not for the fact that they have [deiformity] in them potentially, they would not be able to become priests.

The hierarch is called "angel of the Almighty Lord" in the Scriptures, as the excellent Dionysius [the Areopagite] testifies in his book written for Timothy.[26] In the books of the Old Testament the priest is, moreover, called "god," for example, in the prophet David's statement in the Psalms: "I said: You are gods and all of you are sons of the Most High."[27] The prophet informs us that all of us—both the priests among us and the rest of the people believing in Christ—are called "sons of the Most High," while the hierarchs are called "gods."

Another proof of this* is that God attributes to those who believe in Him His most sublime characteristic when He says in the Torah: "You shall be holy, for I am holy."[28] It is for this reason, too, that the prophet says in the Psalms: "The God of gods, the Lord, spoke and summoned the earth."[29] He says also: "The God of gods shall appear in Zion."†[30] Christ our Lord also said to His disciples: "You shall sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[31] Thus God has made them gods, for judgment is the prerogative of God. It is in the same sense, too, that the prophet David prophesied in the Psalms, saying: "God stood in the assembly of gods and judges in the midst

* That is, of the human capacity to become deiform through priesthood.

† Agathon interprets both verses to mean that the "gods" are the hierarchs.

of gods."[32] God also said to Moses, His prophet: "I shall make you a god to Pharaoh, and I shall make Aaron your prophet."[33] This is because Moses ordained his brother Aaron a priest, in accordance with God's command, and so Moses is [Aaron's] hierarch. It is for this reason that God gave [Moses] His own name ["god"], saying "I shall make you a god." Thus, every hierarch was called "god," on account of a power granted by God.

C. An Excursus on Biblical Anthropomorphisms

Among the signs demonstrating the veracity of the Incarnation of the Creator's Word is the fact that [God] had permitted, indeed had inspired His prophets[34] and messengers to describe Him in anthropomorphic ways and to characterize Him as having composite organs, circumscribable aspects, spatial motions, and diverse shapes. This also includes [emotions such as] grief, regret, bitterness, fury, jealousy, and sorrow. For example, Adam heard God walking in the garden, while the sound of walking cannot occur except if one has solid limbs.[35] God spoke to Adam and to the other prophets, while audible speech cannot occur except through organs of various characteristics and shapes. When Moses asked God, "Show me Your glory,"[36] God said to him: "No one shall see Me and live, but I shall pass by you while covering you with My hand, and you shall see My back,"[37] and back and hand can only exist in a rational body. The Torah said that God wrote the two tablets of testimony with His finger,[38] and no finger can write except a human finger. The Torah said also that Moses and the elders of the sons of Israel ascended to Mount [Sinai] and saw the trace of the feet of God.[39] The Torah said also that God was hosted by Abraham in the form of a man, and [Abraham] washed His feet, and [God] ate with him.[40] Jacob saw God on top of a ladder of which the bottom was set upon the earth and the top reached up to heaven.[41] God also came down and wrestled with Jacob in the form of a man.[42] One prophet saw God as a young man.[43] Another said that "God's right hand enacts power,"[44] while nothing can have a right hand without being a body which also has a left hand. Yet another said: "God's mighty arm."[45] Another said: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are [open] to their supplications, and His face is against the evildoers."[46] Another said: "Take hold of weapon and lance, and rise up to my help."[47] Another ascribed to God the statement: "I have found David the son of Jesse a man after My own heart."[48] Another recalled that God said: "I will turn My face away from them."[49] Yet another said: "The thoughts of His heart from generation to generation."[50] One of them described God as having eyebrows and hair.[51] Another mentioned that He

had a mouth and lips.[52] Another described Him as having seven eyes with which He looks upon the world.[53] The Torah said that God spoke to Moses "mouth to mouth."[54] Another said that heaven is His throne and the earth is the footstool of His feet.[55] Another said while addressing God: "If You would turn away Your hand."[56]

Another said that God said: "They embittered Me, they provoked Me to wrath, they provoked Me to jealousy."[57] Another said: "They provoked Him to anger and moved Him to jealousy."[58] Another said that God "regretted and repented over His creation of man,"[59] and elsewhere that He repented over having sent down the flood.[60] Another said: "He who sits upon the cherubim,"[61] and sitting is impossible unless one has bodily organs. Another said that God "bowed heaven and descended, and darkness was under His feet, and He rode upon the cherubim and flew."[62] And another said: "He flew upon the wings of the wind."[63] Another said: "The mountain on which God was pleased to dwell."[64]

God, then, is sometimes [described as] provoked to anger, sometimes as embittered, sometimes as such that no one can see Him and live, sometimes as speaking to Moses face to face and mouth to mouth, and sometimes as being hosted by Abraham and eating with him. This intense anthropomorphism and these descriptions of changing states and alternating accidents, more suitable to characterize human beings than spirits and angels, let alone the Creator, may His name be hallowed—all these are, no doubt, a clear indication and a true and rightful proof for the Incarnation of God, to anyone who has discernment. Indeed, prophets did not speak of their own accord; they spoke in virtue of God's inspiration to them. If God had not intended to become incarnate, He was definitely able to address [the prophets] without anthropomorphism and to dissuade them from describing Him with human qualities and with mutually contradictory attributes.

D. A History of Priesthood

God gave Adam and the righteous among his progeny priesthood and prophecy from the beginning of creation, until it reached the great Melchizedek. The proof that Adam was both a prophet and a priest is [the following]. He prophesied about Eve, saying: "This is bone of my bones,"[65] and the Torah reports: "And God created on the earth all the beasts of the wilderness and all the birds of heaven and brought them to Adam, and he saw them and called them, and whatever Adam called [each] animal, that was its name."[66] This is a proof that he was a prophet. As for his being a priest, this is [indicated] by his statement concerning the woman: "Therefore a man shall

leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."[67] By saying this, he instituted a law,[68] and only priests command to observe the law. God also made him a ruler, for the Torah says that God appointed Adam to rule over all the cattle, the beasts of the field, the birds of heaven, and the fish of the sea.[69]

Adam bequeathed priesthood to Abel, the righteous among his sons. Abel offered sacrifices and God accepted them from him,[70] only priests being able to offer sacrifices. Adam did not give priesthood to Cain, for through his prophetic powers he knew that Cain did not deserve it. Moreover, priesthood does not belong to everyone who is a descendent of Adam. If it were possible for sons of priests to become priests merely in virtue of their descent, all people would be priests, for all of them are Adam's progeny. Cain imagined that it is legitimate for priests and nonpriests alike to offer sacrifices, and so he ventured to offer a sacrifice as his brother Abel had done. Yet, God did not accept Cain's sacrifice, and so envy and anger toward his brother overcame him, and he killed him. Thus, priesthood was transferred from one righteous patriarch to another until it reached Noah. He offered the sacrifices mentioned in the Torah.[71] After Noah, [priesthood] reached Melchizedek, the most exalted of all the priests and the most perfect in priesthood.[72] Neither the priesthood of Aaron nor the priesthood of others can be compared to his, as God said by the tongue of his prophet David in the Psalm: "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."[73] He did not say "after the order of Aaron," for God did not intend to preserve the priesthood of Aaron forever. He appointed a limit for it: it reached it and ceased.* The prophet did not say regarding Melchizedek's priesthood that it would last until a certain time. Instead, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he said: "forever." Indeed, Melchizedek's priesthood is preserved forever in us, the community of Christians, for Melchizedek's sacrifices were bread and wine,[74] and likewise Christ our Lord offered bread and wine.†[75] It is about [Christ], may His name be blessed, that the prophet [David] prophesied when he said: "You are the priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Our Lord bequeathed the priestly office to his disciples and apostles, assigning it to those who were worthy of it, in accordance with the Lord's command to them. Priesthood will continue until the end of all ages. As for the sacrifices of Aaron and his descendants, these were animals chosen [for the task], and God did not preserve them forever. [. . .]

When Christ, may His name be hallowed, came and sacrificed Himself

* Aaronic priesthood ended with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

† Hence, according to Agathon, both the Last Supper and the Christian Eucharist are modeled on Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine to Abraham.

for us who believe in Him, redeeming us from the law of sin, He instituted for us a new law which neither decreases nor changes and which tribulations of time cannot abolish. He purified us from [animal] sacrifices, blood, burned hair, wool, and bones, which all human souls loathe, let alone the righteous among them, and whose stench disgusts the beasts, let alone intelligent and rational creatures. Thus, Christ became priest according to the order of Melchizedek forever, as the prophet [David] had prophesied about Him. He became [all at the same time] He who offers, the sacrifice, and He who receives the sacrifice. These [three] features cannot be combined except in Him. They cannot belong to anyone else, because He is both He who gives and He who takes, He who receives and He who is received.*[76] Other priests after Him, on the other hand, only offer sacrifices, while He, may His name be blessed, receives [the sacrifices] from them. They do the giving, and He does the taking.

Having accomplished His economy and fulfilled His governance and all that the prophets had foretold and prophesied about Him, the Lord sealed His works at the time of His Ascension into heaven by ordaining His disciples to the priesthood, as the Evangelist says in the Gospel: "He raised His hands, and blessed them, and breathed [upon them], saying: Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they will be forgiven; if you keep and retain them to any person, they will be retained."[77] Then He inspired them with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in them to prescribe prayers and blessings for each of the ranks of priesthood, its ordinances, dedication of temples and altars, sanctification of holy chrism and oil, blessing of the water, and baptisms. They performed these prayers upon those who, in their view, were worthy and deserving of becoming priests or bishops like them. They followed one another in imitating [the Lord] as He laid His hand on each [disciple's] head and blessed him.

Likewise, they prescribed for themselves and for their worthy successors to lay hands on those deserving to become priests or bishops. They also laid down the law, the ordinances, the proofs, the indications, and the signs from which believers after them were to take cue and in accordance with which they were to act—those who adhere to their doctrine, imitate their ordinances, and follow their example in choosing priests and hierarchs. They fixed these stipulations in their canons, reinforcing their [instruction] to follow them and to abstain from transgressing or violating any of them with [the threat of] anathema and excommunication. They announced that

* This seems to be a paraphrase of the prayer that the priest recites silently during the "Cherubic hymn" in the Divine Liturgy: "Thou art He that offereth and is offered, that accepteth and is distributed, O Christ our God."

whoever violates any of them has transgressed and breached the boundaries of faith and has become as one of the infidels. All the holy councils have reaffirmed these ordinances. For example, the Sixth Council,* in Canon 1 decrees to keep the ordinances and regulations of the apostles and of all the councils after them; whoever transgresses this, if he be a priest let him be deposed, and if he be a layman let him be anathema.[78] In Canon 2 they reinforced [the requirement] to accept the *Apostolic Canons* and to abstain from transgressing them or any of [the canons of] subsequent councils, and the canons of Saint Basil. They mentioned also at the same [Sixth] Council, in Canon 4: "Whoever transgresses or fails to observe any of the ordinances of this council, if he be a priest, let him be deposed from his rank, and if he be a layman, let him be excommunicated and banned from the church."

E. Criteria for Priesthood and Episcopate

There are three criteria for election to priesthood and to the ranks of episcopate, according to the number [of the hypostases] of the Holy Trinity: [the criterion of] time and test; [the criterion of] sense and observation; and [the criterion of] spirit and trial.

As for [the criterion of] time and test, it is that the person elected must be thirty years old or more, but not less than that, according to the decision of the council convened in the days of Emperor Justinian: "There shall not be ordained a priest younger than thirty years." This is in Canon 43 of [its decisions].[79] The Sixth Council, in Canon 14 also says: "No one younger than thirty years shall be ordained priest, [and ordinations should only be carried out] after an inquiry and investigation of the candidate's ways, whether they have been proper."[80]

As for [the criterion of] sense and observation: he must be perfect in his constitution, of handsome stature, pleasant demeanor, and proportionate bodily members, for [the priest] is a mirror for his people. Since the majority of people judge about the general [qualities] on the basis of what they observe, and about the hidden [qualities] on the surface, an ugly person with deformed organs would often be despised by the common folk and by outsiders [i.e., non-Christians] who have no knowledge. They would find fault with him and think little of him, and when people think little of their priest or bishop on account of his ugliness or pernicious gossip, his authority over them disappears. When his authority disappears, his instructions are neglected. When his instructions

* The Quinisext Council in Trullo in 692.

are neglected, he can no longer function as a bishop or priest. When he can no longer function as a priest or bishop, religion is abolished, and ignoramuses among the common folk and the outsiders will find a way to ridicule it. Therefore, Saint Basil said: "It is necessary for a bishop to be handsome, in addition to having a good reputation."[81]

As for [the criterion of] spirit and trial: the elected priest must be chaste, pure, virtuous, merciful, pious from his youth, knowledgeable about religious matters and laws, and persistent in defending them. He must not be like me, the wretched sinner, deficient in all the virtues. I have understood my deficiency and withdrawn from my high rank, preserving its exalted value from my flaws, as Saint Paul says: "Whoever desires the position of a bishop, desires a good work. A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, chaste, handsome, loving towards the strangers, able to teach, not given to wine. He must not be violent, but generous [?], not loving money, and one who rules his house well."[82] He said also: "If a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the Church of God?"[83]

F. Criticism of Contemporary Bishops

Not everyone who is summoned to be a bishop or a priest and is elevated to this post is, in fact, chosen by God, as [Christ], may His name be blessed, says in the pure Gospel: "Many are summoned, but few are chosen."[84] Not everyone who has been prayed upon and has been ordained priest or bishop is such that these prayers really stick to him, even if those who say [the prayers] upon him and who perform the task [of ordination] might themselves be virtuous. Our Lord, may His name be blessed, said to His disciples: "Greet [the household you visit with peace], and if the household is worthy of your peace, it will come upon it; but if it is not worthy of your peace, your peace will return to you."[85] Likewise, whoever is prayed upon, if he is worthy, the prayers will stick to him, but if he is unworthy, they will bounce back and will not stick to him. [. . .]

Those [today] who are summoned as the apostles' successors [to be bishops] do not care about clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, visiting a prisoner, helping a sinner to mend his ways, assisting those astray to regain [the true path], or defending religion. They are only concerned with and thinking about hoarding and amassing treasures, wearing soft and comfortable clothes, riding swift horses, indulging in delicious foods, drinks, and different kinds of pleasures, filling their treasuries with possessions, and other things that I would rather not mention in this book.

[. . .] In their covetousness and greed they go as far as to call [money] a blessing, whereas [in reality] it is a curse, because what is the source of all evils is the most fundamental curse and whatever is such that its lover is called an idol worshipper, that thing is an affliction and a punishment [from God]. If a poor man comes to them, they frown on him, send him away, and turn their back on him, even if he is virtuous and wise. If, on the other hand, a rich man comes their way, they rejoice at his coming and invite him to draw near, even if he is ignorant and wicked. They deem him worthy to be a priest or a bishop and mix and mingle with him to seek his opinion and advice. [. . .]

Removing such a bishop [from power] is a duty, and if it should be impossible to remove him, then one must stay away from him until God takes care of him, as He said by the tongue of the prophet Isaiah: "Enter your closet and close your door until the anger of the Lord is past."[86] Holding him in contempt, condemning, deriding, scorning him in speech, and revealing the truth about him to the believers is an obligation, and it carries a great reward. [. . .]

I do not claim for my sinful self the status of a teacher, but the status of a doorkeeper, who is the lowest of all people, yet he awakens the kings and wakes up the nobles, admonishing the righteous ones, all the while remaining himself lowly and despised. I, the unworthy and wretched sinner, ask Christ our Lord and true God, the Savior of all creation, who redeemed us with His blood, healed us with His passion, and bequeathed to us the Kingdom in His compassion and mercy, to guide me and all those who believe in Him to the true path, the path that is bright and narrow, sorrowful and hard, divine and Christian, leading unto life. I [ask Him] to bring about spiritual love, harmony in accordance with the Gospel, and religious peace among the sons of the Church; to give strength to the bishops of His people and to the priests of His altars to work in obedience of Him and of His apostles; and [to grant] what brings one near Him and allows one to draw toward Him and unite with Him, through the intercessions of Her who, of all creation, is high and exalted beyond every heavenly and earthly rank, the Mother of Light, pure, chosen, and elected from all the progeny of Adam, the holy Mary, together with the glorious Saint John the Baptist, seal of the prophets and their master,*[87] and through the prayers of all the saints and the righteous prophets. Amen, Amen, Amen.

* These are, originally, Islamic terms applied to Muhammad. Agathon deliberately uses them to indicate that, in the Christian view, John the Baptist rather than Muhammad was the last prophet.

Suggested Reading

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Chapter 10

Paul of Antioch

بولس الأنطاكي

Sidney H. Griffith

Paul, a monk of Antioch, whose *Letter to a Muslim Friend* was well known among both Christian and Muslim scholars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was the scholarly, early thirteenth-century Arab Orthodox bishop of Sidon in today's Lebanon. While almost nothing is known of his life, except for tidbits that can be gleaned from his writings, some two dozen Arabic theological and philosophical texts are attributed to Paul among the surviving Arabic manuscripts of the Middle Ages.[1] A selection of five of these Arabic works, deemed to be surely authentic, were edited in a critical edition and published in a French translation in 1964.[2] Several other texts attributed to him, notably three treatises on philosophical themes, about which there has been some discussion concerning their authenticity, were published earlier and translated into German.[3] But with the exception of the *Letter to a Muslim Friend*, scant scholarly attention has been paid to the works of this important Arabic-speaking Christian theologian.

Paul of Antioch wrote on the major themes and topics that had engaged the attention of earlier Arabic-speaking Christian thinkers: the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, the oneness of God, the union of divine and human natures in Christ, Christ's miracles, the entry of Jews and Gentiles into Christianity,[4] the confessional differences among the several Christian communities, along with philosophical topics such as good and evil, free will, and predestination. His work is characterized by a thorough familiarity with earlier Arab Christian thought both within the Arab Orthodox tradition and beyond it; for example, in several places he alludes to and reflects his reading of the work of the writer of the Church of the East, Elias of Nisibis (975–1046). What is more, Paul's writing in general, and not just in the *Letter to a Muslim Friend* or in other texts directed to Muslim queries, reveals

a predilection on his part for an Arabic idiom that is distinctly Islamic in much of its vocabulary and turns of phrase, reflecting the broader intellectual and cultural milieu in which he lived. This feature of his work raises the question of his intended audience. While in several of his treatises he speaks of replying to questions posed by Muslims, and he even addresses Muslims, it nevertheless seems that Paul's fellow Arabic-speaking Christians are his primary audience, to whom he hoped to show how Christian convictions can be reasonably explained from a Christian perspective in the learned discourse of the now dominant Islamic intellectual establishment, including a Christian reading of passages from the Qurʾan. This primary purpose, of course, does not exclude an appeal to a Muslim readership as well, as is notably the case in the *Letter to a Muslim Friend*, which did in fact elicit a Muslim response.

It is unclear just when Paul of Antioch composed his *Letter to a Muslim Friend*;[5] it has to have been sometime after the death, in 1046, of Elias of Nisibis, whose work Paul quoted in his other treatises, and before the year 1232, when the earliest surviving copy of Paul's text was made.[6] Given these parameters, and the fact that the Muslim jurist Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn Idris al-Qarafi (1228–85) included a refutation of Paul's arguments point by point in his anti-Christian polemics,[7] albeit without naming the bishop or his letter, it seems reasonable to think that Paul of Antioch, whose theology was thoroughly Orthodox in its confessional profile, flourished in the first half of the thirteenth century,[8] at a time when there was no longer any Crusader or Latin presence in Sidon.[9] This period would also be the chronological framework within which his *Letter* would the more readily have come to the attention of Shihab al-Din al-Qarafi in Cairo, just a few years after its composition. And given this Muslim response, it would also be the right time for Paul's letter to have come to the attention of the anonymous Arabic-speaking Christian apologist in Cyprus, who in the early years of the fourteenth century edited and expanded Paul's letter and sent copies to two prominent Muslim scholars of the day—to Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) in 1316 and to Ibn Abi Talib al-Dimashqi (d.1327) in 1321[10]—both of whom wrote rejoinders to the Cypriot's considerably revised edition of Paul's original letter.[11]

Paul of Antioch's *Letter to a Muslim Friend* opens with an account of the bishop's sojourn in what he calls "the homelands of the Romans [i.e., the Byzantines], Constantinople, the country of Amalfi, some Frankish provinces, and Rome," where he says he came into conversation with "the most important people . . . their most eminent and learned men." These were all territories in which one might reasonably expect to find learned

Byzantines,[12] Orthodox churchmen and theologians, whose learning and authority the Arab Orthodox Christians in Islamic lands might well have been expected to hold in high esteem. Paul says that his Muslim friend wanted to know what these learned Byzantines thought of Muhammad, and in the rest of his letter he proceeds to recount what they had to say about the Muslim prophet, the Qurʾan, and Islam, along with what Paul presents as their defense of basic Christian teachings by way of a Christian interpretation of selected passages from the Qurʾan. He concludes his letter by expressing his wish that if the report pleases his friend, God be praised "since He will have made quarreling cease between His servants the Christians and the Muslims." Otherwise, says Paul, he would be willing as a mediator to convey his Muslim friend's objections to the learned Byzantines in expectation of a suitable reply.

Scholars have raised many questions about the scenario Paul evokes in his letter, starting with the issue of the likelihood of the Arab Orthodox prelate's travel to the territories of the Romans he mentions. Is it a fictional scenario, a literary device that evokes a not unlikely journey at the time in order to introduce into the narrative the learned Byzantines who would present an apology for Christianity in an idiom suitable to Arab Orthodox Christians? And how likely is it that there would be learned Byzantines living in the territories of the Romans who would have had the knowledge of the Arabic Qurʾan and its interpretation that the letter attributes to them? At this remove in time it is impossible to answer these questions definitively. Most commentators are skeptical about the veracity of the details in the account of the journey, and they see in it a clever literary ploy that Paul has devised to purchase some protective distance in his own Islamic milieu from any undesirable repercussions from the subtle anti-Islamic polemic in the letter and to lend some verisimilitude to his own disavowal of responsibility for the force of the letter's apologetic claims.[13] One might also see in Paul's evocation of the views of the learned Byzantines a bid to take advantage of the persuasive potential of the authority of Orthodox teachers abroad for the Arab Orthodox community in Syria/Palestine, with whom he and they were in ecclesiastical communion.

Surely the most striking feature of the letter is Paul's heavy use of selected quotations from the Qurʾan[14] to bolster his argument that Muhammad was a prophet sent with the Arabic Qurʾan to the pagan Arabs and not to other peoples; that Christians are believers in the one God and they are not polytheists, nor are they called by God to accept Islam or the Qurʾan. Moreover, in addition to the conventional lines of reasoning customarily used by Christian apologists in the Islamic milieu, he also uses Qurʾan quotations to

support the reasonableness of Christian doctrines, including the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, the Orthodox doctrine of the union of divinity and humanity in Christ, and even the integrity of the Christian scriptures and the superiority of Christianity as a religion over Judaism and Islam. Overall, Paul's language is polite, peaceful, and respectful of Muhammad, the Qurʾan, Islam, and of his Muslim correspondent, albeit that he commends the superiority of Christianity.

Most contemporary scholars who have studied Paul of Antioch's *Letter to a Muslim Friend* have pointed out that, in his use of the Qurʾan for apologetic purposes, Paul "had no qualms about quoting verses out of context, mutilating them or distorting them, and ignoring other verses which could not be reconciled with his Christian exegesis of the Qurʾan."[15] Some commentators even describe his method negatively as "deceptively reasonable," "cunning," showing "casual indifference to Muslim sensitivities," employing an "implicitly arrogant manner," and delivering "an open insult and also a challenge to received Muslim teachings that could not be allowed to stand."[16] And so the letter elicited the strong responses from the Muslim scholars mentioned above, who wrote refutations of Paul's arguments and criticized his interpretations of the Qurʾan passages he cites as well as his prooftexting approach to the Islamic scripture.

Read from the perspective of the history of Christian responses to the challenge of Islam written over the centuries by churchmen living within the Arabic-speaking Oriental patriarchates, Paul of Antioch's *Letter*, with its readiness to address the challenge in Islamic and Qurʾanic terms, is notable for its knowledgeable approach and its appeal to alternative interpretations of the Islamic scripture that differ from those supported by Muslims. In his day the conventions of interreligious controversy—be the controversialists Jews, Christians, or Muslims—countenanced and encouraged strong arguments in defense of one's own convictions and expected clearly expressed objections to the opponents' positions. It is unrealistically anachronistic to expect to find writers of almost a millennium ago following the usages and etiquette of interreligious dialogue adopted by twenty-first-century academicians.

Translation

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, the God whose substance is confessed to be one, and whose hypostases are posited to be three.

A letter from the wretched monk, Paul of Antioch, the bishop of Sidon, to one of his Muslim friends in Sidon.

May God grant us and you the benefit of reflection and may He make it conducive for you and for us to gain insight into the works that lead to Paradise and deliver one from Hell-fire.

Dear friend and genuine brother, may God lengthen your abiding in the fullness of grace, may He safeguard you from misfortunes, and may He take good care of you. When I informed you of my journey into the homelands of the Romans, to Constantinople, the country of Amalfi,* some Frankish provinces, and Rome, you asked me to give you a clear account of what the people I met, and with whom I spoke, thought of Muhammad, peace be upon him. Due to my status, I mean the episcopacy, I met with the most important people of those regions, their leaders, and I conversed with their most eminent and learned men. So I shall answer your question, because of your surpassing love and affection.

Those people were saying, "When we heard that a man whose name was Muhammad had appeared among the Arabs saying that he was God's messenger and that he brought a book,† mentioning that it was sent down to him from God, exalted be He, we set about getting possession of the book for ourselves."

I said, "Since you have heard of this messenger and you have made an effort to get for yourselves the book which he brought, what is the reason why you have not followed him? The Qurʾan makes a special point of saying, 'Whoever wants a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him; in the hereafter he will be among the losers.'"[17]

They answered, "For many reasons."

I said, "What are they?"

They said, "One of them is the fact that the Qurʾan is in Arabic and not in our own language, according to what comes up in it: 'We have sent down the Qurʾan in Arabic.'[18] And we have also found in it: 'We have never sent a messenger except in the language of his people.'[19] Also, 'He is the One who raised up among the scripture-less‡[20] one of them to be a messenger who would read out His verses for them. He would purify them and teach

* The Duchy of Amalfi in southeastern Italy, from which many Crusaders had come to the east, was an important seaport and university town in its heyday. Before its independence from Constantinople in the eleventh century, the city had been under Byzantine rule and subsequently preserved much of its Greek heritage.

† The book is the Qurʾan. Hereinafter, when Paul of Antioch speaks of or quotes from "the book" with reference to the Qurʾan, the translation specifies the Qurʾan to avoid confusion.

‡ The difficult term here, *al-ummiyyūn*, is often understood to mean "gentiles" or "illiterates"; in Qurʾan 2:78, they are characterized as "not knowing the scripture."

them the scripture and wisdom even if previously they had been in manifest error.'[21] Then there is, 'You shall warn a people to whom no one has come previously to warn them; perhaps they will be rightly guided.'[22] There is also, 'We have inspired you with an Arabic Qurʾan so that you might bring a warning to the Mother of Villages* and to her environs and you shall warn of the Day of Gathering; there is no doubt about it.'[23] Also there is, 'You shall warn people whose fathers had not been warned, so they were heedless.'[24] And there is, 'Warn your own nearest of kin.'[25]

"When we considered [these quotations], we knew that he was not sent to us, but to the Pagan Arabs, to whom, he said, no one had come to give a warning before him. We are not bound to follow him because messengers had already come to us before him, addressing us in our own languages. They warned us and they handed over to us the Torah and the Gospel in our own vernacular languages. It is clear from the Qurʾan that he was sent only to the pagan Arabs. So, according to the demand of justice, the quotation 'Whoever wants a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him; in the hereafter he will be among the losers'[26] would mean, [the Qurʾan's] own people to whom it came in their own vernacular language, and not anyone to whom it did not come—and this according to its own testimony.

"Then too we found in the Qurʾan an expression of great esteem for the Lord Christ and His mother. God made the two of them a sign for the worlds. Here is what He said: 'We breathed of Our Spirit into the one who guarded her chastity and We made her and her Son a sign to the worlds.'[27] There is also, 'The angels said, "O Mary, God has chosen you and purified you above the women of the worlds."'[28]

"There are accompanying testimonies to the Lord Christ by way of miracles. [According to the Qurʾan], He was conceived without any intercourse with a man. Rather, it was by way of the Annunciation of God's angel to His mother.[29] He spoke in the cradle, He brought the dead to life, He cured the lame, He cleansed the leper, He made clay into the shape of a bird and breathed into it and it flew away, by God's permission.[30] He was God's Spirit and His Word.[31] This is all in agreement with what we think and believe.

"We also found there that God raised Christ up to Himself,[32] and He put those who followed [Christ] above those who disbelieved, up to the day of the resurrection. That is what it says: 'God said, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, I am going to take You to myself and raise You up to Me; I am going to cleanse You of those who have disbelieved and I am going to put those who follow You above those who have disbelieved, up to the day of

* An epithet for Mecca.

resurrection.'"[33] There is also, 'We sent Jesus, Mary's Son; We brought Him the Gospel and We have put mercy and compassion into the hearts of those who have followed Him.'[34]

"We have also found [the Qurʾan] extolling our Gospel, putting our monks' cells and churches before the mosques, and testifying in their regard that God's name is much recalled in them. That is what it says: 'Were it not for God's repelling some people with others, the monks' cells, the churches, the synagogues, and the mosques, in which God's name is much recalled, would have been destroyed.'[35]

"These and other things require us to hold on to our own religion and not to neglect our doctrinal allegiance, neither to abandon what we have, nor to follow someone other than the Lord Christ, the Word of God, and His apostles, whom He sent to us to warn us.

"As for those who are extolled in the Qurʾan and who are venerated in its statement, 'We have sent Our messengers with clear signs, and the Book [i.e., the Gospel] was with them, so that people might stand up for fairness,'[36] it means [Christ's] messengers, the apostles. For had it meant Abraham, Moses, David, or Muhammad, it would have said, 'and the *books* were with them'; it would not have said, 'the Book,' which is the Gospel. It also says in the Qurʾan, 'A man in a hurry has come from the furthermost part of the city. He said, "O People, follow the messengers who have been sent; follow those who do not ask for a wage, the rightly guided ones."'[37] It means the apostles, for it did not say, 'the messenger.'* Then it testifies in their behalf that they are 'God's helpers,' for it says, 'When Jesus, Son of Mary, said, "Who are My helpers unto God?" The apostles said, "We are God's helpers." A party of the sons of Israel believed and a party disbelieved. We helped those who believed against their enemy, and they quickly became victorious.'[38]

"Here is what [the Qurʾan] says in appreciation of our Gospel and the scriptures in our possession: 'We have sent down to you the book attesting to the truth of the Torah and the Gospel before it.'[39] There is also, 'If you are in doubt about what We have sent down to you ask those who were reading the scripture before you.'[40] So it affirms what we have—yes—and in its attesting to their truthfulness, it removes from our Gospel and our scriptures any suspicion of changing them or altering what is in them."†[41]

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* Paul intends "the messengers" in the Qurʾanic passage to refer to the apostles. He specifies that the Qurʾanic text does not say, "the messenger" in the singular, that is, Muhammad, and interprets the Qurʾan to be saying that people should follow Christ's messengers, the apostles, and not Muhammad, "the messenger."

† This statement is in reference to the Muslim charge that the People of the Book have corrupted, changed, or otherwise altered the words of their scriptures and/or their meanings.

I said, "What if someone were to say that the change could have come about after these words [in the Qurʾan]?"

They said, "No one could say this because about six hundred years had passed [from the beginning of Christianity until the time of the Qurʾan], and people had our scriptures in their possession, and they had been reading them in their different languages, with their countries being far distant from one another, so how could anyone alter anything in them or change it?

"As for the Gospel, [the Qurʾan] testifies in its behalf that it is guidance for the God-fearing. Here is what it says, '*Alif, lam, mim*; there is no doubt that there is in that scripture guidance for the God-fearing.'[42] The '*alif, lam, mim*' is an abbreviation of the word 'Christ.'*[43] The scripture [mentioned in this verse] is the Gospel, for [the Qurʾan] says, 'If they call you [Muhammad] a liar, the messengers before you were called liars; they brought clear signs, Psalms, and enlightening scripture.'[44] The Gospel is what the messengers before him [Muhammad] brought and the clear signs too. [The Gospel] is 'that scripture,'[45] for 'that' would not be 'this' one [the Qurʾan].

"Then we found something that is even weightier as a prooftext than the foregoing. It is [the Qurʾanic] statement, 'I believe in whatever scripture God has sent down and I am bidden to deal justly among you. God is our Lord and your Lord. We have our works and you have your works. There is no argument between us and you. God will bring us and you together; the ultimate journey is to Him.'[46] By way of contrast, [the Qurʾan] says in reference to those who are not People of the Book, 'Say, O unbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. I am not going to worship what you worship, nor will you worship what I worship. You have your religion and I have my religion.'[47]

"[The Qurʾan] also says to those to whom it came, 'Do not debate with the People of the Book save in the best way, except for those of them who have done wrong. Say, "We believe in what has been sent down to us and has been sent down to you. Our God and your God is one and we submit to Him / we are Muslims."'[48] It does not say, 'Submit to Him / become Muslims yourselves.'†

"Regarding 'those who have done wrong,'[49] no one doubts that they are the Jews, who worshipped the head of the calf and disbelieved in God.[50]

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* Here Paul of Antioch is citing the so-called "mysterious letters" that occur at the beginning of a number of *sura*s in the Qurʾan. He interprets the first two of them to signify the definite article in Arabic, followed by the third letter corresponding to "m," the first letter in the word Messiah, that is, Christ.

† The underlying verb form in this passage is the participle, *muslim*, which would perhaps have been anachronistically understood in the thirteenth century to mean, "we are Muslims." Paul of Antioch is pointing out that it does not say imperatively, "become Muslims."

They killed His prophets and His messengers,[51] and they worshipped idols. They sacrificed to demons not only irrational animals but even their own sons and daughters, according to what God testified against them on the tongue of the prophet David in Psalm 105:* 'They sacrificed their sons and daughters to the demons; they shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, which they immolated to the sculpted figures of Canaan, and the earth became polluted with the blood and defiled with their deeds.'[52]

"As for us Christians,[53] we have not done what the Jews have done. For that reason there comes up in the Qurʾan: 'You surely will find the people with the strongest enmity toward those who believe† to be the Jews and those who practice polytheism. And you will certainly find the most affectionate towards those who believe to be those who say, "We are Christians." That is because there are priests and monks among them and they do not act arrogantly.'[54] It mentions priests and monks so that it would not be said, 'This is said about someone other than you.'[55] It shows our good deeds and our good intentions.

"Moreover [in this passage the Qurʾan] specifically denies that the name 'polytheism' applies to us by saying, 'The Jews and those who practice polytheism are the strongest in enmity toward those who believe, and the Christians are the closest to them in affection.'[56] It had already made this point clear when it said, 'Those who believe, those who act as Jews, the Christians, the Sabeans, and those who practice polytheism.'[57] God will distinguish between them in regard to that about which they differ.

"It is not only that [the Qurʾan] denies that the name 'polytheism' applies to us, but it makes it clear that no one else has any advantage over us when it says, 'Those who believe, those who practice Judaism, the Christians, and the Sabaeans, those who believe in God and in the last day, and do good works; they will have their reward with their Lord, no fear will be upon them, nor will they grieve.'[58] So this quotation puts all the peoples on a par with one another, the Muslims and the others. This is made clear in [the Qurʾan's] saying, 'O People, we have created you male and female. We have made you nations and tribes so that you might come to know one another. The noblest of you with God are the most God-fearing of you.'[59]

"Then [the Qurʾan] praises our sacrificial offerings‡ and it threatens us that if we neglect our practice and disbelieve what has been sent down to us, we will be punished with a punishment with which no one else in the world will be punished. Here is what it says: 'When the apostles said,[60] "O Jesus,

* Paul follows the Septuagint numbering of the Psalms; in the Hebrew Bible it is Ps. 106.

† That is, towards the Muslims.

‡ Paul of Antioch is referring to the Eucharist.

Son of Mary, is Your Lord able to let down a table for us from the heavens?" He said, "Fear God, if you are believers." They said, "We want to eat of it and our hearts will become calm and we will know that You have told us the truth, and we will be witnesses for it." Jesus, Son of Mary, said, "O God, our Lord, let down for us a table from the heavens to be a feast for the first and the last of us, and a sign from You, and sustain us; You are the best of sustainers." God said, "I will let it down for you, and whoever of you who disbelieves afterwards, I will punish him with a punishment, with which I will not punish anyone else in the world."'[61] The table is the sacrificial offering which we offer in every holy liturgy.

"Given the previously cited passages, it would certainly not be considered proper among intelligent people for us to neglect God's Spirit and His Word,[62] to whom testimony is given in the Qurʾan by means of miracles.* It even says of Him, 'There is none of them [*sic*][63] who will not believe in Him before His death and on the day of resurrection He will be a witness against them.'[64] Would we then follow someone not sent to us, whose own doubting about what he himself brought is put in his own words in this book? [The Qurʾan says,] 'Either I [*sic*][65] or you are certainly either on right guidance or in error.'†[66] There is also the command to him in the 'Opening' *sura*‡ of the Qurʾan that he should ask for guidance to 'the straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed favor, who do not evoke [God's] anger, nor go astray.'[67] The ones on whom He has bestowed favor are we, Christians, and the ones against whom He is angered are the Jews, and those going astray are the worshippers of idols.§ The 'path' is the 'way,' that is, the doctrine.[68] Because we know that God is just, and it does not befit His justice to demand on the day of resurrection that any people should have followed a messenger whom He had not sent to them, nor had they happened upon his book in their own language, neither by themselves nor by way of a herald preceding him, we will not follow this messenger, nor jettison what we have in our own possession."

I said, "[The Muslims] criticize us for our saying Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

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* This is a reference to Jesus, son of Mary, as He is called in the Qurʾan, where He is said to be only "God's messenger, and His word, which He imparted to Mary, and a spirit from Him" (Qurʾan 4:171).

† Paul of Antioch takes this Qurʾanic passage to signify that Muhammad was unsure about the validity of his own message.

‡ The term "Opening" (*al-Fatiha*) is the name of the first *sura*, or chapter, of the Qurʾan.

§ Here Paul of Antioch is altering a traditional Muslim interpretation of these verses, which identifies those on whom God has bestowed favor as the Muslims, those who evoke God's anger as the Jews, and those who go astray as the Christians.

[The learned Byzantines] said, "Had they known that when we say this, we intend only to give a sound basis to the statement that God, exalted be He, is a living, rational entity, they would not criticize us for it.

"For we, the community of Christians, when we consider the origin of [created] things, we know that something else has to have brought about their origin, for their origin could not have come from their own essence, due to the contradictoriness that is in it.* So we say that this something else is unlike created things, since He is the Creator for everything. We emphatically deny His nonexistence.

We see things divided into two categories: things living and things nonliving. So we describe Him by the more sublime of the two categories, and we say that He is 'living,' so we might deny Him any mortality.

"We see living things divided into two categories, rational living things and nonrational living things, so we describe Him by the more sublime of the two categories, and we say that He is rational, so we might deny Him any ignorance.

"The three names are the one God, an eternal, never-ending, living, rational thing. For us the essence is the Father, the Son is the rationality, and the life is the Holy Spirit. [God's life] comes up in the Qurʾan, 'God, there is no god but He, the living one, the everlasting one.'[69]

"Regarding these names, we Christians do not name Him with them on our own accord. Rather, God, exalted be He, named His own divinity with these [names]. Here is what He said, addressing the sons of Israel, on the tongue of Moses, 'Is not this the Father who made you, created you, and took you for His own?'[70] Also on the tongue of Moses, the prophet, 'God's Spirit was hovering over the waters.'[71] There is also what He said on the tongue of David, the prophet, 'Do not take Your Holy Spirit away from me.'[72] Also on the tongue of David, the prophet, 'By the Word of God, the heavens are strengthened, and by the Spirit of His mouth all their powers.'[73] There is also His saying on the tongue of Job the Righteous, 'The Spirit of God created me, and He teaches me.'[74] There is what He says on the tongue of the prophet Isaiah, 'The flower dries up, and the grass too dries up, but the Word of God lasts forever.'[75] There is our Lord Christ's saying to His pure disciples in the holy Gospel, 'Go to all the peoples, baptize them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to keep all that I commanded you.'[76]

* The "contradictoriness" of which Paul speaks refers to the opposite qualities of the four basic elements, fire, air, earth, and water (hot/cold, dry/moist), which in earlier times were thought to be the basic components of all created things. The contradictoriness of their qualities would require an external power to hold them together in any created entity.

"In this scripture [the Qurʾan] it also says, 'He is the One who gives life and brings death. When He determines something He just says to it, "Be," and it comes to be.'*[77] There is also, 'Our Word has come before to our good servants.'[78] And also, 'God said, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, I will call My blessing down upon You and upon Your mother; I have aided You by the Holy Spirit."'[79] Also, 'God spoke with Moses in a conversation.'†[80] Also, 'Mary, the daughter of ʿImran, is the one who guarded her private parts and We breathed of Our Spirit into them. She affirmed the truth of her Lord's words and of His scriptures; she was one of the humble ones.'[81] All the Muslims say that the Qurʾan is God's speech; only someone who is alive and rational has speech.

"In addition to this, the essential attributes follow the course of the names. No one of the attributes is [identical to] the other, but God is one; He is not apportioned nor divided into parts. In the beginning of the Qurʾan it says, 'In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.'[82] It focuses on three attributes‡ to the exclusion of others, which we call Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We mean by them a thing that is living and rational. There are no other essential attributes by means of which He is to be described except living and rational, albeit that in the Qurʾan there is the passage, 'Say, call upon God and call upon the Compassionate One; whatever you call Him, His are the beautiful names.'[83]

"As for our saying 'Christ is the Son of God, born of Him without any new production before the ages,' we mean by it that He is eternally a 'son,' i.e., 'an act of rationality' and the 'Father' is eternally a 'father,' i.e., 'the rational one,' who, when the end of time came[84]—meaning the time of disbelief and oppression—sent His Word, i.e., His 'rationality,' without any separation from the Father, His Progenitor, nor any differentiation from Him, just as the light of the sun is sent onto the earth without being separated from the disk, its progenitor, and just as the word of man is sent to anyone who hears it without any separation from the mind that is its progenitor.

"He became incarnate as a perfect man from the Holy Spirit and the Lady Mary, the virgin. He was born of her in human nature, not in divine nature, since no accident impinges upon the divine nature. She gave birth to

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* Paul of Antioch is taking God's spoken command "Be" in this quotation from the Qurʾan to refer to the Word, the second Person of the Holy Trinity.

† Here again the Qurʾanic reference to God's speaking to Moses is interpreted as implying that God has a "Word."

‡ That is, God, compassionate, and merciful. Paul of Antioch is here drawing a parallel between the Muslim *basmala* (the formula "in the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful") and the Christian notion of the Trinity.

Him without any corruption impinging on her virginity, since she became pregnant without intercourse with any man. Rather, she kept her virginity, just as the burning bush which the Prophet Moses saw was afire without burning up.[85]

"This removes from us the charge that when we say Christ is the Son of God we mean fleshly sonship, or that the Father is before the Son, or that He has a child from a female companion. We have already been cleared of this charge by the Qurʾan when it says, 'The Originator of the heavens and the earth, how is it that He would have a child, as He has no female companion.'*[86] And it also affirms the Son who we say is 'rationality,' when it says, 'Say, indeed I swear by this land, you are a settler in this land, and [I swear] by a Begetter and what He has begotten.'[87]

"As for the incarnation of the Word of God as a perfect man, it is because the Creator, exalted be He, does not address any one of the prophets except from behind a veil, according to what comes in the Qurʾan, 'It is not for a man of flesh and blood that God should converse with him except by way of revelation or from behind a veil.'[88] Given that subtle things do not become manifest except in material things, would the Word of God, exalted be He, which created the subtle things appear in something other than the material? No, indeed! For this reason, He appeared in Jesus, Son of Mary, since man is the most exalted of what God created. Therefore, it is through [Jesus' humanity] that He addressed the creatures, who witnessed Him, just as He addressed Moses the prophet through the box-thorn bush.

"He worked miracles in His divinity and manifested weakness in His humanity, and both actions belong to the one Lord Christ. It is just as it is said: In his soul, Zayd is abiding, immortal, and incorruptible, while in his body, Zayd is perishing, mortal, and corruptible. Both statements apply to one and the same Zayd.†

"According to this same analogy we say that Christ was crucified, meaning that He was crucified in His humanity, but He was not crucified in His divinity. It comes in the Qurʾan, 'They did not kill Him, nor did they crucify Him, but it seemed so to them.'‡[89]

"We see the blacksmith taking a piece of iron and heating it in the fire

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* With the quotation of this passage from the Qurʾan, which is usually interpreted as a polemic against the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, Paul ingeniously construes it instead to support this Christian teaching.

† "Zayd" is a proper name that often serves in Arabic texts as an example of an abstract human being.

‡ Here again Paul interprets a passage from the Qurʾan in an ingenious way. The verse is usually understood in much Islamic exegesis to deny the historicity of the crucifixion. In Paul's interpretation it denies only that Christ was crucified in His divinity.

until it too becomes fire. He hammers it and cuts it up and the fire is still united with it. The breaking and cutting impinge upon the nature of the iron, while the fire is free of it. Rather, [the fire] provides what is in accord with its nature, i.e., burning and light. The single piece comprises both natures.

"In the same sense, the two natures of the Lord Christ are united in His one person. What comes in the Qurʾan agrees with what we say; it names Christ 'the Spirit of God and His Word.'[90] And it names Christ 'Jesus, Son of Mary'; and it says, 'Christ, Jesus, Son of Mary, is only God's messenger, His Word that He cast into Mary, and a Spirit from Him.'*[91] Another place in the Qurʾan says, 'That is [Jesus, the Son of Mary], the true Word, in which they draw distinctions,'[92] while in the statement cited above [the Qurʾan] declares [Christ] to be one [by indicating both natures together].

"Earlier [we quoted] what God said on the tongue of the prophet Moses, addressing the sons of Israel, 'Is not He the Father who made you, created you, and took you for His own?'[93] There is also what He said on the tongue of the prophet David, 'Let not Your Holy Spirit be removed from me.'[94] Also, 'By the Word of God the heavens are strengthened and by the Spirit of His mouth all their hosts.'[95] These passages do not point to three creators but to one Creator, the Father, His Spirit, i.e., His Life, and His Word, i.e., His rationality.

"One says such things as, 'The tailor sews the garment, and the hand of the tailor sews the garment,' or 'The carpenter makes the chair and the hand of the carpenter makes the chair.' The tailor and his hand are not two tailors, nor are the carpenter and his hand two carpenters. Rather, the tailor and his hand are one; the carpenter and his hand are one. Such is the case with our saying, 'God and His Word and His Spirit are one God.' This is what we mean by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

"We know that this statement of ours does not imply worship of three Gods, just as three men are not necessarily meant when we speak of man's intelligence, of man's rationality, and of man's spirit. Nor are there three fires when we speak of the flame of the fire, the light of the fire, and the heat of the fire; nor are there three suns when we speak of the disk of the sun, the light of the sun, and the heat of the sun.

"No censure applies to us, nor do we have any sin, given that this is our view of God, hallowed be His names and exalted be His gifts, and given the fact that we have not neglected what was handed down to us, nor have we discarded what we believe in, nor have we followed anything else. This is especially the case since we have such clear testimonies and evident proofs

* Paul is arguing that this verse refers jointly to both natures of Christ: the divine ("Word") and the human ("Jesus, Son of Mary").

as come from the scripture that this messenger has brought [i.e., from Muhammad and the Qurʾan]."

I said [to the learned Byzantines], "If we argue based on what is in their scripture, the Muslims will say, 'If you are going to argue based on part of it, you must accept all of it.'"

They said, "This is not the case. Suppose a man has a bill of debt for a hundred *dinar*s against another man, on which it is written that he has paid, and the creditor produces the bill [again] and demands that the debtor pay a hundred *dinar*s. Is it possible, that in response to the debtor's argument that the bill says that he had paid [the debt in full], the creditor should say to him, 'Just as you acknowledge this part of the bill, acknowledge the hundred *dinar*s too and pay them'? No, the man would refuse the hundred *dinar*s that are on the bill since it is also on the bill that he had already paid.

"In the same way, because of the arguments on our behalf we find in the Qurʾan, we reject whatever else is said in it and urged against us.

"In addition, we say that the most important of the arguments testifying in our behalf that we find in the Qurʾan that this messenger brought is that God has put us 'above those who have disbelieved right up to the day of resurrection,'[96] because of our following the Lord Christ, 'the Spirit of God and His Word.'[97] And we are 'the most affectionate towards those who believe,'[98] and He has 'put compassion and mercy into our hearts,'[99] along with His affirmation of the importance of our Gospel, our scriptures, our hermitages, and our churches.[100] No one else has a mark of favor higher than us. Moreover he has proposed only favor and good treatment for us.

"How would it be possible for us, or good for us, according to what the Qurʾan itself makes clear and the evidence of reason requires, which is like a touchstone and standard, to let go of what we have, the table that God sent down to us and made for us 'a feast for us first and last, a sign from Him,'[101] not to mention His threat to us that if we disbelieve He will punish us 'with a punishment with which He will not punish anyone else in the world'[102]—to follow someone who did not even come to us but to others than us?"

I said, "They [the Muslims] will say, 'If your belief in the Creator, exalted be He, is that He is one, what prompts you to name Him three hypostases, and to name one of them Father, one of them Son, and one of them Spirit? Your audience will imagine that you believe that God is three composite individuals, or three Gods, or three parts, and that He has a son. Whoever does not know what you believe will suppose that you therefore mean a son resulting from human intercourse and generation. You will be bringing against yourselves a charge of which you are innocent.'"

They said, "They [have the same problem]! While they believe in the

Creator, exalted be His power, and that He is not possessed of a body, nor of limbs and members, nor is He confined in a place, what prompts them to say that He has eyes to see with, hands to extend, a shin to bare,[103] a face to turn to every direction, and a side, and that He comes 'in canopies of clouds'?[104] Anyone who hears them will imagine that God, exalted be He, is a body, possessed of members and limbs, and that He moves from place to place in canopies of clouds. Whoever hears but does not understand what they believe will suppose that they ascribe a body to the Creator, exalted be He; and some of them do indeed believe that and hold it as an article of the creed.*[105] Whoever does not ascertain their true belief will be charging them with something of which they are innocent."

I said, "[The Muslims] will say, 'The reason we say that God has eyes, hands, a face, a thigh, a side, and that He comes in canopies of clouds, is that the Qurʾan says it. What is intended is something other than the plain sense of the words. We curse and call an infidel everyone who takes it literally and believes that God has eyes, hands, a face, a side, a thigh, which are [bodily] limbs and members, and that His essence moves from place to place, and other such things as require ascribing corporeality to God and anthropomorphism. Given the fact that we call anyone who believes that and anything like it an infidel, it would not be right for our opponent to hold us responsible for it, since we do not believe it.'"

[The learned Byzantines] said, "Likewise, the reason for our saying that God is three hypostases, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is that the Gospel speaks of it. What is intended by 'hypostases' is something other than composite individuals, with parts, components, and other features that necessitate polytheism and multiplicity. [What is intended] by 'the Father' and 'the Son' is not the fatherhood and sonship of marriage, procreation, sexual intercourse, or sleeping together.

"We curse, anathematize, and call infidel all who believe that the three hypostases are three different or even congruent gods, or three conjoined bodies, or three separate parts, or three composite individuals, accidents, powers, or anything else that implies ascribing partners to God, composition, or anthropomorphism, or that what is meant by speaking of 'the Father' and 'the Son' is the fatherhood and sonship of marriage, procreation, sleeping together, or sexual intercourse, be it generation from a pair of bodies or of angels, or any other created beings. Since we say he is an infidel who believes this or anything of the sort that conduces to polytheism or to

* There were presumably still in Paul of Antioch's day traditionalist Muslims who held that passages in the Qurʾan that seem to ascribe corporeality to God should not be interpreted metaphorically but taken at face value, albeit that only God knows how that could be.

anthropomorphism, our adversaries have no right to hold us responsible for it, given the fact that we do not believe it.

"If they hold us responsible for polytheism and anthropomorphism because we say that God, exalted be He, is one substance, three hypostases, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because on the face of it this necessitates multiplicity and anthropomorphism, we would hold them responsible for ascribing corporeality to God and anthropomorphism because of their saying that God has eyes, hands, a face, a thigh, and a side, and that He sits on a throne after not having been on it,[106] or anything else that in plain speech implies ascribing corporeality to God and anthropomorphism."

I said, "[The Muslims] will deny our saying that God, exalted be He, is a substance."*

They said, "We hear that these people are possessed of graciousness, culture, and knowledge. Anyone with this profile would have read something of the books of the philosophers and of logic, and he would not deny this.

"Everything in existence is either a substance or an accident. This is because everything we can think of we find to be either self-subsistent and needing nothing else for its existence—and those are the substances—or not self-subsistent and dependent on something else for its existence—and these are the accidents. [Since this division is exhaustive] there can be no third category in addition to these two. The nobler of the two is what is self-subsistent, that is, needing nothing else for its existence.

"Since the Creator, hallowed be His names, is the noblest of existing entities, given that He is the cause of all the rest of them, it is necessary that He belong to the noblest of the categories, and the noblest of them is the substance. Due to this fact, we say that He is a substance, not like created substances, just as we say that He is a thing, not like created things. [Were we to deny that He is a substance,] this would mean that His subsistence requires something else and that He depends on something else for His existence, and it is wrong to say this about the Creator, exalted be He."

I said, "[The Muslims] will say to us, 'We only refrain from naming Him substance because substance is something that receives accidents and occupies an extended space. For this reason, we do not apply to Him the statement that He, exalted be He, is a substance.'"

They said, "Whatever receives accidents and occupies an extended space is a material substance. A subtle substance does not receive accidents nor does it occupy an extended space. This is the case with the substance of the

* While Christians have traditionally maintained that God is one essence or substance (Greek *ousia* / Arabic *jawhar*) and three hypostases, Muslim philosophers and theologians argue that the category of substance applies only to created beings and cannot be said to apply to God.

soul, the substance of the mind, the substance of the light, and whatever else follows the course of subtle substances. If created subtle substances do not receive accidents and do not occupy an extended space, would the Creator of both subtle and material substances, the One who conjoins the subtle and the corporeal things with one another, occupy an extended space? Certainly not!"

Then [the learned Byzantines] said, "We are amazed at these people, with their culture and the graciousness they possess. How do they not know that there are [only] two kinds of religion:* the religion of justice and the religion of grace?[107] Because the Creator, exalted be He, is both just and bountiful, it was necessary that He manifest His justice to His creatures, so He sent Moses the prophet to the Israelites to institute the religion of justice and He bade them to carry out its mode of conduct to the point that it would become stable and routine among them.

"Then, since it is only the Most Perfect of the perfect who can institute [the religion of] perfection, which is grace, it was necessary that He, hallowed be His names and exalted be His gifts, be Himself the One who would institute it; for there is none more perfect than He.

"And because He is bountiful, it was necessary that He exercise His bountifulness by means of the most exalted of beings, and among beings there is none better than His Word, that is His 'rationality.' Therefore it was necessary that He exercise His bountifulness by means of His Word, so that He would be the Most Bountiful of the bountiful in virtue of the fact that He exercised His bountifulness by means of the best of beings.

"For this it was necessary that He should take on a sensory essence through which His power and His bountifulness would become manifest. And since there does not exist among beings created by Him anyone nobler than man, He took on the human nature of the Lady Mary, the one purified and chosen 'over all the women of the worlds.'[108]

"No further [religion] remains to be instituted consequent upon this perfection! Whereas everything that preceded it demanded it, there would be no need for anything to come after it, because nothing could come after perfection and be superior in grace. Rather, it would be beneath it or derived from it; and the derivative is a kind of grace for which there is no need.† With this said, enough! Peace be on whoever follows right guidance!"

This is what I learned from the people whom I saw and with whom I conversed, along with what they argued in favor of their position. If what

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* Literally, two religious laws (*shari'a*s).

† Paul is arguing in so many words that the Muslim religion (*shari'a*), being either inferior to Christianity or derivative from it (or both), is superfluous for Christians who, he argues, follow the higher religion of grace.

they have related is sound, to God be the praise and the benefit, since He will have made quarreling cease between His servants the Christians and the Muslims; may God guard them all. And if it is not sound, may my honorable brother and estimable friend explain it to me, and may God extend His protection and grant him longevity, so that I might notify them of that and see what they have [to say] about it. They asked me for that and made me a mediator. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds![109]

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Chapter 11

Patriarch Macarius Ibn al-Zaʿim

البطريرك مكاريوس ابن الزعيم

Nikolaj Serikoff

Macarius Ibn al-Zaʿim, an outstanding representative of Christian Arabic literature in the seventeenth century, was born around 1600 and died on June 12, 1672.[1] He was elected patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Antioch on November 12, 1647, and kept this office until his death. To collect alms for his impoverished Church, he traveled widely and visited even distant Romania, Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia. In Russia, in his capacity as patriarch of Antioch, he participated in the local synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in the years 1665 and 1666–67. His activity aiming at enlightening his flock was not dissimilar to that of his counterpart, contemporary, and coreligionist the Russian patriarch Nikon (r. 1652–58). In particular, like Nikon, Macarius took a keen interest in the correction of the prayer books in his native tongue in accordance with those written in Greek.[2] In contrast to his son, the well-known seventeenth-century Arab Christian historian Paul of Aleppo (see chapter 12), the literary activities of Macarius have not received enough admiration and attention from modern scholars.[3] Despite this, however, Macarius was a very prolific writer who left a large body of translations, excerpts, and commentaries, many of which were based on Greek works of Byzantine and post-Byzantine authors.

Macarius's humble origins seem to have given him an impetus to learning. He probably got his earliest education from his father, a clergyman himself. As an adolescent he entered the circle of the Archbishop of Aleppo Meletius Karma (r. 1612–34), who later briefly became the patriarch of Antioch under the name of Euthymius II (r. 1634–35). Following Meletius Karma's example, Macarius not only sought to inspire his flock through his teaching and to improve their material conditions, but he also set out to deepen their knowledge of Christianity. Since in the Orthodox tradition

Church doctrine is expressed through its liturgical life, Macarius embarked on a program of revising and translating the liturgical books, some of which had already existed in various Arabic versions, while others were available in Greek or Syriac.[4] The lengthy extracts he made from works of ecclesiastical writers could be seen in this context as a proof of his scholarly zeal, as well as an attempt to provide his flock with much-needed knowledge. The lack of such knowledge among what he referred to as "our people" was frequently lamented by him.[5]

We have to stress again that the knowledge for enlightening his flock was collected from books written not only in Arabic but also in Greek. According to some sources, Macarius learned this language when he was in his forties. Judging by the standards of the seventeenth century, he was already at a rather advanced age. The natural difficulties of mastering a completely unknown foreign language were exacerbated by a very rudimentary tradition of language instruction among the Arabic-speaking populations of the Ottoman Empire and an almost complete lack of teaching manuals and dictionaries. Besides, Greek learning and Greek speech were not a frequent phenomenon in seventeenth-century Syria. The lack of basic ecclesiastical knowledge was so dramatic that years later Macarius commissioned his well-educated son, Archdeacon Paul of Aleppo, to translate into Arabic seminal books on Greek and Byzantine history, the chronicles of Pseudo-Dorotheos of Monemvasia[6] and Matthew Kigala (d. 1642?),[7] because the relevant sections of the existing Arab chronicles that dealt with Greek and Byzantine history were too schematic and insufficient. These circumstances forced Macarius to learn almost everything from the beginning, with no previous knowledge. New, unknown words, tricky particles, a vastly different syntax—to mention but a few difficulties that Macarius mush have encountered—make his achievements all the more remarkable.*[8]

The defining problem of Macarius's patriarchate was the Church of Antioch's dire financial circumstances. Church authorities were faced with the constant need to pay out bribes to the Ottoman rulers to secure their approval for the consecration of bishops. They also had to cover the *jizya* (poll tax) on behalf of indigent Christians who would otherwise seek relief from the fiscal burden by converting to Islam. In order to manage the patriarchate's crippling debts, Macarius sought financial assistance abroad. His fund-raising journeys to Orthodox countries have already been mentioned above and will be discussed more extensively in chapter 12. What is less widely known is the fact that Macarius also dispatched letters to the pope

* See chapter 12 for Paul of Aleppo's account of a conversation that Macarius held, via an interpreter, in Greek with the Russian tsar Alexis.

of Rome, the Papal Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, and the king of France.[9] This was a time when Roman Catholic missionary interest in the Middle East was at its peak, and France sought to position itself as the defender of the Ottoman Empire's Christians. Macarius followed the precedent set by Euthymius II Karma in maintaining close relations with the Catholic missionaries in Syria and even allowing them to preach in his churches and hear confessions from the Orthodox faithful—thus inadvertently paving the way for the momentous schism that was to tear the Church of Antioch apart half a century later (1724).[10]

Four short texts by the Patriarch of Antioch Macarius Ibn al-Zaʿim, illustrative of diverse aspects of his literary activity, are offered in an English translation below. The first text (about two folios in the original script) is called "Explanation in Arabic of the Meaning of Some Greek names of the Saints."[11] It provides explanations of the names of 191 saints celebrated by the Orthodox Church of Antioch through the church year (running from September to August). To facilitate understanding, the actual date of each saint's commemoration, where available, is provided in brackets in the translation below. Additional information about some of the saints is also provided in brackets, in order to disambiguate them from their namesakes. The majority of the explanations originate from an earlier Greek synaxarion (a compilation of saints' lives). However, there are some explanations that, no doubt, originate with Macarius himself, especially where he tries to explain the Greek proper names with their Arabic counterparts, thus making the Greek meanings culturally familiar to his audience.*

Macarius's division of Greek composite names into roots is not always linguistically correct. For instance, in explaining the name "Quiricus" (which actually means "herald," from the Greek *keryx*), he interpreted it as "Cyricus" (a variant spelling of "Cyriacus") and parsed it into two roots: "master" (in Greek: *kyr*) and "house" (in Greek: *oikos*). Such "erroneous" translations are often taken over from earlier Church tradition, to which Macarius attached paramount importance.[12]

This text constitutes part of the "Notebook" that Macarius compiled during his travels to Russia. This Notebook comprises forty-eight diverse excerpts and translations from Greek. Its original copy, handwritten by Macarius himself, is kept at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Saint Petersburg (Russia), MS B1227. The list of explained Greek names of the saints, like other texts in this Notebook, is illustrative of Macarius's continuous at-

* The list of explanations through such counterparts is remarkably long: "John" was rendered as "Niʿmatullah," "Phocas" as "Nuri," "Timothy" as "ʿAbd al-Karim," and "Theodosius" as "Nasrallah," to name just a few.

tempts to enlighten his people and to stress that the early history of the Church took place in their homeland: Syria and Palestine. Other texts of a similar orientation found in this Notebook include, for instance, a list of place names mentioned in the New Testament and in the Synaxarion, and even a commentary on the Muslim invocation "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate," the so-called "basmala." According to Macarius, this Muslim phrase allowed for a change of letters, which after being put in the "correct" order gives a eulogy to the Son of God Jesus Christ.[13]

The second and the third texts translated below—two short treatises on the sign of the cross and on the hierarchical blessing—also come from the Patriarch Macarius's Notebook.[14] It should be recalled that one key aspect of the seventeenth-century schism in the Russian Church was a change in the way one was to make the sign of the cross. Older Russian practice had used two fingers, while the Nikonian reform, publicly supported by Macarius during his stay in Russia (see chapter 12), required the use of three fingers, in accordance with contemporary Greek (and Arab) practice. Resistance to this new way of crossing oneself became an emblem of resistance to the entire program of liturgical reforms in the Russian Church. It is doubtless with this complex background in mind that we should read Macarius's simple, pastoral notes about the symbolism of making the sign of the cross and of the hierarchical blessing.

The fourth text translated below is the second of two extant letters addressed by Macarius to the king of France, Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715). The first letter, written in 1653, details the difficult circumstances of the Christians of the East and appeals to Louis XIV to protect them in his role as "King of the Christians." Rather than asking for material support, it requests French political assistance in securing a decree from the Ottoman sultan ending the persecution of Christians.[15] The second letter translated below was sent ten years later, in 1663. It reprises much of the same content as the first letter but in addition makes a direct appeal for financial assistance.[16] Neither letter seems to have received the desired response.[17]

Translation

A. Explanation in Arabic of the Meaning of Some Greek Names of the Saints

September (Aylul)[18]

[Sept. 1] Symeon [the Stylite the Elder] means "sign" or "signal."[19] Joshua [son of Nun] in Hebrew means "Savior."[20] Aeithalas means "he who is constant in [spiritual] struggle."[21] Callistus means "beautiful."[22]

Hermogenes [of Nicomedia] translates as "esteemed because of his origin."

[Sept. 2] John [the Faster] in Hebrew means the same as "Niʿmatullah" [God's grace] in Arabic; the Greek equivalent of the name "Niʿmatullah" is Chariton.*

[Sept. 3] Anthimus in Greek means "flowers." Theoctistus [of Palestine] means "creature of God" and also equals the Arabic name "ʿAbd al-Khaliq" [servant of the Creator].

[Sept. 4] Moses in Hebrew translates as "I saved him out of the water."[23] Babylas [of Antioch] denotes a kind of tree called "larch."

[Sept. 7] Sozon equals to "ʿAbd al-Hayy" [servant of the Living God].

[Sept. 6] Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Rafael are the chiefs of God's angels because the component "-el" in Hebrew is the name of God.[24]

[Sept. 8] Mary [the Mother of God] means the "Queen of the World."[25]

[Sept. 9] Joachim means "Resurrection"; Anna means "God's grace."

[Sept. 10] Menodora means "gift of the month"; Metrodora is "gift of the mother"; and Nymphodora is "gift of the bride."

[Sept. 11] Theodora [of Alexandria] stands for "Hibatullah" [God's gift], and this name is also a counterpart for Theodore and Dorotheos. And the equivalent of Theodotus in Arabic is "ʿAtallah" [God-given].

[Sept. 12] Autonomus means "this is the law" or the "lawgiver."

[Sept. 15] Nicetas [Great Martyr] equals the name "Mansur" [victorious].

[Sept. 16] Euphemia means "she who is praised."

[Sept. 17] Sophia [of Rome] means "wisdom"; Pistis is "faith"; Elpis is "hope"; and Agape is "love."

[Sept. 19] Trophimus means "somebody who is spoilt" or "who is replenished."[26]

[Sept. 20] Eustathius means "he who believes in God."

[Sept. 21] Quadratus means "he who provides" [?] or "a shepherd."

[Sept. 22] Phocas is the equivalent of the name "Nuri" [luminous].

[Sept. 25] Euphrosyne means "joy."

[Sept. 27] Callistratus means "an excellent warrior."

[Sept. 29] Cyriacus [the Hermit] stands for "ʿAbd al-Ahad" [servant of the One God].[27]

[Sept. 30] Gregory [the Enlightener of Armenia] means "he who is awake, alert, or vigilant."

October (Tishrin I)

[Oct. 4] Hierotheos means "the priest of God."

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* The three names equated here are etymologically related to words meaning "grace" in Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek.

[Oct. 5] Charitina stands for "Nuʿayma" [little grace].[28]

[Oct. 8] Pelagia means "depth of the sea."

[Oct. 9] Andronicus [of Egypt] means "victorious man," and [his wife] Athanasia is "she who lives on [forever]" or "she who never dies."

[Oct. 10] Eulampius is "he who shines" or "he who illumines." Eulampia is "she who illumines."

[Oct. 11] Theophanes [bishop of Nicea] means "he who appears from God."

[Oct. 12] Probus means "he who has advanced."[29] Tarachus is "he who abstains from evil" or "he who threatens."

[Oct. 13] Carpus means "fruit."

[Oct. 14] Nazarius means "Nazarene." Protasius means "the doorkeeper."

[Oct. 15] Lucian means "jackal," while Lucius means "wolf."

[Oct. 17] Andrew [of Crete] means "brave."

[Oct. 20] Artemius means "baker."[30]

[Oct. 21] Hilarion means "the splendid."

[Oct. 24] Arethas [of Najran] means "virtuous."*

[Oct. 25] Martyrius means "the martyrs."

[Oct. 28] Stephen [of Mar Saba] means "crown."

[Oct. 29] Anastasia [of Rome] means "Resurrection." Abramius [the Recluse] is "he who crosses."

[Oct. 30] Zenobius means "life" and "lifetime."

[Oct. 31] Stachys means "ear of corn"; Urban means an "orphan"; and Amplias means "vinedresser."[31]

November (Tishrin II)

[Nov. 2] Aphthonius means "he who is envied"; Elpidephorus means "dressed in hope."

[?] Myron means "anointment."[32]

[Nov. 5] Galacteon [of Emesa] means "milkman," and [his wife] Episteme means "shy."[33]

[Nov. 7] Lazarus [the Wonderworker] is Hebrew for the name "Mansur" [victorious].

[Nov. 10] Erastus [the apostle] means "lover" or "beloved."

[Nov. 15] Abibus [of Edessa] is Syriac for the name "Habib" [beloved], which also stands for the Greek name "Agapius" [beloved].

[Nov. 18] Platon [of Ancyra] means "a plane tree" in Greek.[34] The town

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* Macarius did not recognize the Semitic origin of this name, whose original Arabic form is al-Harith (the name of the Arab saint martyred in the south Arabian city of Najran in the year 523). He misinterpreted it as a Greek name, derived from the Greek word *aretē*, "virtue."

of Balatunus and its fortress in fact mean a "city of plane trees."*[35] The bird woodpecker is called "pelican" in Greek, and David calls it "the pelican of the wilderness."†[36]

[Nov. 22] Philemon means "the only one who loves."

[Nov. 24] Clemens also known as Clement [of Rome] means "generosity."

[Nov. 26] Acacius translates as "he who has no evil."

[Nov. 2] Acindynus means "what is easily procured." Pegasius translates as "traveler."

[Nov. 29] Irenarchus is the "source of peace."

[Nov. 2] Anempodistus means "he who is at ease."

[?] Polyleucus means "he who is completely white."[37]

December (Kanun I)

[Dec. 6] Nicholas [of Myra] means "he who conquers the people."

[Dec. 7] Ambrose [of Milan] means "satisfied."

[Dec. 10] Hermogenes [of Alexandria] means "he who gathers the family."[38]

[Dec. 12] Spyridon means "a large basket" or "basket made of palm leaves."

[Dec. 13] Eustratius means "a soldier"; Auxentius means "addition"; Eugene means "noble," "esteemed," or "coming from a good family." Lucy [of Siracuse] means "wolfess."

[Dec. 15] Eleutherius means "freedman."

January (Kanun II)

[Jan. 1] Basil [the Great] translates as "royal" or "he who has become king."

[Jan. 5] Theopemptus means "sent by God."

[Jan. 8] Domnica means "mistress."

[Jan. 11] Theodosius is the equivalent for the name "Nasrallah" [God's victory].

[Jan. 16] Peter [the apostle] means "rock."[39]

[Jan. 18] Athanasius means "he who lives on [forever]"; Cyril means "master of all."

[Jan. 19] Macarius means "blessed."

[Jan. 20] Euthymius is the equivalent of the name "Farah" [joy] and means "gladness."

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* The reference is apparently to the Syrian fortress of Balatunus (now called Mahalibeh) southeast of Latakia. It was destroyed in a massive earthquake on December 29, 1408.

† Macarius authored a beautiful short text on the symbolic meaning of the pelican, preserved in the same Notebook as the text translated here. There he compares the pelican to Jesus Christ, because of its alleged ability to revive its chicks, poisoned by the snake, with its own blood.

[Jan. 21] Neophytus means "a new shoot."

[Jan. 22] Timothy means "honored by God" and also equals the name "ʿAbd al-Karim" [servant of the Generous God].

[Jan. 23] Agathangelus translates as "the good angel."

[Jan. 24] Xenia [of Rome] means "a foreign woman."

[Jan. 26] Xenophon is "he who cherishes the foreigners."

[Jan. 31] Cyrus is translated as "master."

February (Shbat)

[Feb. 4] Isidore means "servant of the homeland" [?].[40]

[Feb. 5] Agatha means "good."

[Feb. 7] Parthenius means "chaste like a virgin."

[Feb. 9] Nicephorus means "dressed in victory."

[Feb. 10] Charalampus translates as "joy and luster."

[Feb. 12] Meletius means "a teacher."

[Feb. 19] Archippus translates as "the first horseman" or "the [first] knight."

[Feb. 20] Leo [of Catania] is the equivalent of the name "Asad" [lion].

[Feb. 23] Polycarp means "bearing many fruits."

March (Adhar)

[Mar. 1] Eudocia means "approval."

[Mar. 8] Theophylactus [of Nicomedia] is "protected by God."

[Mar. 11] Sophronius [of Jerusalem] is the equivalent of the name "ʿAfif" [chaste].

[Mar. 14] Benedict translates as "blessed."

[Mar. 15] Agapius [of Caesaria] is the equivalent of the name "Habib" [beloved].

[Mar. 23] Nicon means "victor."

April (Nisan)

[Apr. 2] Titus [the Wonderworker] equals the name "Karim" [generous or honorable].

[Apr. 6] Eutychius [of Constantinople] is the equivalent of the name "Saʿid" [fortunate].

[Apr. 9] Eupsychius means "crumbs."[41]

[Apr. 11] Antipas translates as "deputy."

[Apr. 23] George means "a peasant" or "someone who is made a peasant."

[Apr. 16] Agape [virgin-martyr] means "love."

[Apr. 28] Jason means "health."

May (Ayyar)

[May 3] Maura means "black."

[May 5] Irene translates as "peace."

[May 8] Arsenius means "brave" or "bold."

[May 9] Christopher means "dressed in Christ."

[May 12] Epiphanius is "he who appears."

[May 13] Glyceria means "sweet."

[May 19] Patrick means patrician, a commander over more than 12,000 men.

[May 22] Basiliscus means "royal."

[May 27] Therapontus means "cure."

June (Haziran)

[Jun. 4] Metrophanes translates as "famous through his mother."

[Jun. 19] Jude [the apostle] equals to the names "Aslan," "Leon," and "Asad" [all of which mean "lion"].*

[Jun. 22] Eusebius [of Samosata] means "believer" or "having a firm faith."

July (Tammuz)

[Jul. 3] Hyacinth means the stone "hyacinth"; Anatolius [of Constantinople] means "an easterner."

[Jul. 5] Lampadus means "a candle."

[Jul. 8] Procopius means "successful."

[Jul. 15] Quiricus [of Tarsus] means "master of the house."†

[Jul. 9] Pancratius means "very beautiful."

[Jul. 19] Dius [of Antioch] means "double" and also "Jupiter."

[Jul. 23] Theophilus [martyr in Lycia] means "he who loves God."

[Jul. 24] Christina [of Tyre] means "a Christian lady."

[Jul. 26] Parasceva [of Rome] translates as "Friday." Hermolaus means "he who gathers the people."

[Jul. 27] Panteleimon means "all-merciful."

[Jul. 28] Prochorus means "the first in the battle-array."

[Jul. 29] Callinicus means "he who excels in [spiritual] struggle."[42]

[Jul. 28] Timon means "honor."

[Jul. 31] Eudocimus translates as "joy" or "joyfulness."

August (Ab)

[Aug. 5] Eusignius means "the special."

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* The connection between Jude (Judah) and lion goes back to Gen. 49:9. Macarius provides the Turkish, Greek, and Arabic equivalents of the word "lion"—Aslan, Leon (read so for Lawi), and Asad, respectively—all of which serve as proper names.

† Macarius took this as a composite of two roots: *kyr* ("master") and *oikos* ("house"). In reality, Quiricus (from the Greek *kēryx*) means "herald."

[Aug. 12] Photius [of Nicomedia] translates as "luminous" or "illumined."

[Aug. 18] Florus means "a *dinar*."*

[Aug. 20] Samuel [the Prophet] is Hebrew for "begging from God."[43]

[Aug. 22] Agathonicus means an "excellent [spiritual] athlete."

[Aug. 23] Lupus means "wolf."

[?] Theodoulos is the equivalent of the name "ʿAbdallah" [servant of God]. Tychon means "it appeared to him."[44]

[Aug. 24] Eutychius [hieromartyr] is the equivalent of the name "Saʿd" [fortunate].

<*Additional Names*>[45]

Panagiotes is the equivalent of "Ghayth" [abundant rain]. Anastasius means "resurrection" and can also stand for the feast [of Resurrection, i.e., Easter]. Gelasius means "he who laughs" or "laughter." Nicodemus means "he who conquers the army."

Noah means "rest."[46] Benjamin means "son of my pain."[47]

Maurodius translates as "black." Agathon is the equivalent of the name "Salih" [good]. Diogenes means "of double origin." Polychronius means "he who lived many years" or "has had a long life."

Christodoulos is the equivalent of the name "ʿAbd al-Masih" [servant of Christ]. Callopius means "he who does good." Theoleptus is the equivalent of the name "ʿAbd al-Latif" [servant of the Gentle God].

Athenodorus means "the gift of the goddess Athena," and Athenogenes is "he who comes from the city of Athens."

Staurianus is the equivalent of the name "Saliba" [cross]. Philip means "he who loves horses." Nicander means "he who vanquishes the men." Vassa means "violet."

B. A Brief Commentary on How Christians Ought to Make the Sign of the Cross over Their Faces†

This has two explanations. The first one is as follows. The holy Fathers prescribed making the sign of the cross in the following way. First, the person intending to pray must gather together the three fingers of his right hand (three, in reference to the Holy Trinity)—the thumb and the two fingers ad-

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* The correct Latin meaning of this name, "a flower," remained unknown to Macarius. Instead, he interpreted it as referring to the golden coin of the Republic of Florence, called "gold florin" (*fiorino d'oro*). The Italian name of this coin is glossed with a reference to its Oriental counterpart: the golden *dinar*.

† Translated by Alexander Treiger.

jacent to it. Then, he must raise them to the upper part of his head and place them on his forehead. Then, he should bring them down and place them on his abdomen. Then, he should raise them again and place them on his right shoulder. Then, he should raise them from there and place them on his left shoulder. After that, he should bring them down.

When a person places these three fingers on his forehead he should say, "Holy God." When he places them on his abdomen he should say, "Holy Mighty." When he places them on his right shoulder he should say, "Holy Immortal." Finally, when he places them on his left shoulder and then goes down in prostration he should say, "Have mercy on us." Alternatively, when he touches these four parts of his body [with his fingers], he can say, "O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and our God" or "O God, forgive me, a sinner, and have mercy on me."

When a person raises these three fingers to the upper part of his head, this signifies Christ's coming down from heaven to earth. When he places them on his abdomen, this signifies Christ's coming down from heaven, dwelling in the Virgin's womb, taking a body from her, and the fact that He was crucified in this body and saved us. When he places his fingers on his right shoulder, this signifies that Christ will count us among the [righteous] standing on His right hand on the Day of Judgment. When he places his fingers on his left shoulder, this signifies that Christ has delivered us from standing with the sinners on His left.

The second explanation is the following. When a person gathers these three fingers together, raises them to the upper part of his head, and places them on his forehead, this signifies that Christ our Lord and God came down from heaven to earth for the sake of our salvation and so that we might believe in Him. When a person places his fingers on his abdomen, this signifies that Christ was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, and descended to the lowest reaches of Hades, to save the souls of the righteous who had been undergoing a punishment there in the days of old. It also indicates that He is going to save all those believing in Him and keeping His commandments. When a person places his fingers on his right shoulder, this signifies that Christ ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father, and also that He shall come again to judge the living and the dead. He will make the righteous to stand on His right hand, as He had promised us in the pure Gospel.[48] The sinners, however, will stand on His left. When a worshipper places his three fingers on his left shoulder, this signifies that he is praying to [Christ] and beseeching Him that He will not make him one of the people of the left side but will deem him worthy to

stand on His right hand [on the Day of Judgment].

For all these reasons, it is incumbent on every Christian to make the sign of the cross after this fashion, so as to gain all the said benefits, and not to make it in any other way, lest one forfeit the great benefits mentioned above.

C. An Explanation of the Way Hierarchs and Priests Arrange the Fingers of the Right Hand and Bless the Flock, and What This Signifies, Based on Greek [Writings]

One should know that the fingers of the hand are called in Arabic as follows. The thumb is called *al-ibham*; the index finger is called *al-sabbaba*; the middle finger is called *al-isbaʿ*; the following ring finger bears the name of *al-binsir*; and the little finger is called *al-khinsir*. One should also know that when a hierarch or a priest lifts his hand [to bless his flock], he crosses the index finger and the middle finger by placing them one above the other and puts the little finger under them. Then, he arranges the thumb and the ring finger in the form of a cross and in such a manner gives a blessing to the flock or to an individual person.

This way of giving a blessing is explained by the Greek [writers] as follows. The little finger is a symbol of the Greek letter *iota*. When the index finger is placed over the middle finger they together form a sign, resembling the Greek letter *sigma*. These two letters together, *iota* and *sigma*, stand for the word "*Iesous*," that is, Jesus. When the thumb and the ring finger are arranged together, they form a cross, and this figure signifies the Greek letter *chi*. It has already been mentioned that the index finger and the middle finger crossed on top produce the Greek letter *sigma*. The two letters together, *chi* and *sigma*, stand for the Greek word "*Khristos*," which is Christ, the "Anointed," that is, the Messiah.

These two names, "Jesus" and "Christ," signify that [in a priest's blessing] Jesus Christ Himself is blessing all of you, or any individual, and that He acts through everyone. This happens because when a priest gives a blessing, he "borrows," so to speak, the hand of Jesus and His tongue and uses them for the blessing. [This is why] when he gives a blessing,[49] he says: "The blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ be upon all of you" [collectively] or "The blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ be upon you," individually.

It is on account of these sublime matters that the divine Fathers prescribed that hierarchs and priests should bless the people in this way, according to the signification [of the arrangement of the fingers] in the Greek language.

D. The Second Letter to Louis XIV, King of France

Glory be to God always!

To His Most Exalted Majesty, Louis XIV of the Gauls, the Eminent King and Guide of the Christian Religion, may the Lord grant victory to Your Royal Majesty.

Macarius, by the mercy of the Supreme God called Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, prays for salvation from God for your royal majesty, blessings upon your reign, peace from God the Father Almighty and from our Savior Jesus Christ, and the grace of His Holy Spirit, which He poured down upon His disciples, the holy apostles, in the glorious Upper Chamber of Sion,* illumining them by His† appearance amongst them, granting them wisdom, and through them enlightening the minds and understanding of the believers.

May that same peace from God and this blessing—handed over to us, the [apostles'] unworthy successors—appear abundantly upon your eminent and illustrious Christ-loving kingdom, which has been supremely exalted by God. May your glorious majesty be forever crowned with the diadems of [divine] protection and victory and granted the tiaras of triumph and victorious conquest. May victory dwell forever in your tents and march under your banners. May it accompany your decrees and rest upon you even as your beneficence and favors rest upon the people. May God eternally preserve the might of your throne, always renewing and augmenting it even as time elapses and days go by decreasing. May the Lord Jesus Christ grant you a long life and preserve perpetually your power, grandeur, and magnificence, even as He granted this to Christian monarchs of old, making them worthy of felicity both in this world and the next—[kings] who obtained the true, undeniable, and veritable promises, through the intercession of our Lady, the pure Maiden and ever-Virgin Mary, the venerable Saint Peter the Apostle, and all the apostles, martyrs, prophets, and saints, who pleased God with their righteous deeds, Amen.

Now, then, we wish to assure [your] noble throne and exalted and magnificent palace that this wretched person‡ desires nothing other than everlasting health, [divine] grace, and prosperity for your majesty, and that we might be continuously pleased with hearing the celebrated news of your might and your glorious and splendid virtues. We have frequently heard veritable reports concerning your majesty's zeal for the Radiant Religion

* This is a reference to Pentecost (Acts 2). The "Upper Chamber" is mentioned in Acts 1:13.

† "His" refers to the Holy Spirit.

‡ Macarius is referring to himself.

and for its sons, the Catholic Christians—O you, the most powerful of all Christian Kings, who, like the blessed Constantine, is exceedingly devoted to true worship and the true faith! This is the reason why we had earlier dispatched to your royal majesty a patriarchal letter of blessing and prayer.

We wish to inform you now about the situation of your Christian brothers in this land and their extreme hardship, which is now even more severe than in the past. Poor and destitute, having no means to support themselves, they are forced to sell their children to the gentiles.* {The persecutions that they face today surpass perhaps even those inflicted upon the Christians by the impious emperors Diocletian and Maximian.}†50 Despite all this, however, they persevere and remain grateful [to God]. We never tire of consoling them and reminding them of the tribulations endured by the holy martyrs of the past.

When your majesty's faithful servant and an admirer of your royal standard, the consul Picquet,‡51 was here with us, he helped them tremendously, bestowing his favor and mercy upon them and offering them rescue and deliverance with all the means in his power—all this under the benevolent auspices of your majesty.

As we belong to the same noble stock, distinguished by true worship, as your pure family, we implore you to rescue and deliver us from the present hardship which befell us on account of our great sins—just as it is recorded in the books of history how your ancestors of blessed memory, the ancient kings, {in former times delivered the Holy Land and the Christians from servitude to the Hagarenes}.§

We, our master, do not spare anything to rescue and deliver [our fellow-Christians] with money, as far as we are capable and as far as our resources allow. However, we do not have the means for it, for we are poor and destitute, and so we take loans from extortionist merchants. For this reason all the pure church vessels and liturgical items are pawned to them. We are required to pay out [our loans] with interest, which increases by the day and the amount of which is known only to the Almighty God, praise be to Him.

Your majesty's faithful servant and an admirer of your royal standard, the consul François Baron,¶ has likewise never been remiss in helping us all

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* That is, to the Muslims.

† Diocletian (r. 284–305) and his co-ruler Maximian (r. 286–305) were Roman emperors infamous for their persecution of Christians.

‡ François Picquet (1626–85) was French consul in Aleppo in 1652–60.

§ Macarius is evidently invoking the Crusades.

¶ François Baron replaced François Picquet as French consul in Aleppo. He was later appointed commissioner of the French East India Company.

with everything in his power and with whatever resources he had at his disposal. He is now traveling to your majesty and will report to your majesty in person about our situation and about every single one of our tribulations, for we really owe him a great deal.

We do not wish to make this letter too long and overburden your majesty with excessive talk. We express our hope that deliverance and help will come from God and from you, for it is not only the governance of your own Christian subjects that brings you glory, but you ought to take us, destitute as we are, also under your protection and come to our aid in any way our Almighty Lord may inspire you. This is our hope and our plea to your majesty, may God protect [your reign].

We conclude our letter with words of thanks to our good God. We pray to Him that He may bring a successful completion to your good, righteous, and beneficent endeavors, that you may live a happy life in peace and tranquility, as well as security both for you and for all those who seek protection with your honorable person and magnificent court. We pray that our God may grant you to subdue your enemies {and cast them under your feet}. May He support you with His holy angels and preserve you with his luminous hosts. May He strengthen your arm, support your kingdom, and fortify the reins of your government. {May He assist your soldiers, fortify your cavalry, and give courage to your armies,} and after a long and happy and prosperous life may He grant you repose in His heavenly kingdom, together with the fathers, the prophets, the martyrs, and all the saints, Amen. May you prosper and be a supporter of all people. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be upon you, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Written on the 15th of February 1663 of the Christian era in the [divinely] protected city of Aleppo.

Suggested Reading

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Chapter 12

Paul of Aleppo

بولس الحلبي

Ioana Feodorov

Born in 1627, the fourth generation of Christian clerics in the al-Zaʿim family, Paul of Aleppo (Bulus Ibn al-Zaʿim al-Halabi) was an outstanding Arab Christian ecclesiastical writer. He was brought up in the Arab Orthodox spirit by his father Yuhanna Ibn al-Zaʿim, future metropolitan of Aleppo (as Meletius), afterwards enthroned patriarch of Antioch and All the East (as Macarius III, 1647–72)* in Damascus, the seat of the patriarchate since 1366. Ordained deacon in 1647, Paul was soon thereafter made archdeacon of Aleppo, Damascus, and the entire patriarchate, which was predominantly Arab in its hierarchy and liturgy. After a first journey to Eastern Europe and Russia in 1652–59, Paul accompanied his father yet another time to Moscow and on the way back became ill and died in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, in 1669. His first son was to become another patriarch of Antioch: Cyril V Ibn al-Zaʿim.

Invited by his friend the deacon Jibraʾil ibn Qustantin al-Sayegh to keep a journal of his first journey, Paul wrote a firsthand account of the events and places in the Levant and Eastern Europe that he encountered during his seven years of absence from home. Conversant with Orthodox culture and ritual and an inquisitive and accurate writer,[1] he provided, in minute detail, a wealth of information about the geography, history, politics, ethnicity, habits, architecture, and other aspects of the populations and lands with which he became acquainted. As Paul himself reports, he completed his journal after his return to Syria, refining some of his written observations and completing others from memory. He recorded the similarities and variations in liturgical practice and service books, which he explained as the European Christians' closer adherence to the Greek liturgical practice.[2] The

* On Patriarch Macarius III Ibn al-Zaʿim, see chapter 11 above.

linguistic particularities of the countries he visited, the foreign words that he borrowed, and the Greek influence on the Syrian Middle Arabic reflected in Paul's literary style offer new, untapped data for future research.

Patriarch Macarius's aims in undertaking his first journey to Europe were primarily connected with his duties as shepherd to his diocese. The economic situation that he had inherited was alarming: churches and schools were gradually falling apart, while the excessive taxes and exorbitant interest rates imposed by the Ottoman officials on long-unpaid debts shrank the budget of the patriarchate to a level that was not viable.[3] Moreover, in order properly to preserve their religious and social standing, Syrian Christians were in critical need of liturgical books in Arabic. They therefore required printing capacities, as well as political help in their relationship with the Ottoman state and with the patriarch of Constantinople. Although in the seventeenth century Syrian Christians "had arrived at something of a non-doctrinally based *modus vivendi*,"[4] allowing the Arab Orthodox and the Maronite Catholics to face the Muslim authorities as a united front, patriarchs of Antioch traditionally turned for help to their Orthodox brethren-in-faith, whose common Byzantine heritage warranted a proper understanding of their affairs and a prompt fulfillment of their needs.[5]

The resolution to depart on this long, unpredictable journey was encouraged by the European Orthodox rulers' well-known attachment to Orthodox culture and their genuine concern with the situation of Middle Eastern Christians. Still ruled by a local prince, the Romanian Principalities had established a special relationship with the Ottoman state, granting them the status of *ahl al-ʿahd*, "people of the Covenant," superior to that of the *dhimmi*s.[6] Thus, Romanians were allowed to preserve their national state, a certain degree of autonomy in political affairs, their Christian faith, judicial authority, and ancient customs.[7] Since the mid-fourteenth century Romanian princes had granted financial aid, revenues of *metochia*,* estates,[8] relics, and works of art to the monasteries of the Holy Mountain (Mount Athos in Greece), Trebizond, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Saint Catherine's on Mount Sinai.[9] In 1575 Peter the Lame of Moldavia (r. 1574–77) covered the taxes required by the Ottoman authorities of all the monasteries on Mount Athos. As Paul of Aleppo mentions in his journal, Vasile Lupu of Moldavia (r. 1634–53), wishing to emulate the Byzantine emperors, sent his aide Iane the "Sluger"† to pay the enormous debts of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.[10] According to the Romanian historian Nicolae

* A *metochion* (pl. *metochia*) is the Greek term for a monastery that is dependent on a larger monastery or for a piece of property belonging to a monastery or a church outside its usual territory.

† On this figure and the term "sluger" see section C of the translation below.

Iorga, Romanians "took over from Byzantine Greeks the mission of being patrons of Orthodox Christianity, a task for which they sacrificed their treasury"; this situation "gave the Romanian Principalities . . . a role of supremacy which extended all the way to Tiflis, to Antioch, to Cairo."[11]

At the same time, the Russian tsars, in a determined endeavor to preserve the status of "Third Rome" for their capital, Moscow, and to extend their influence in the Mediterranean, endowed the Athonite monasteries with generous donations and dispatched Russian clergy there, to have them acquire a Greek education and a higher spiritual learning. Constantly visited by the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch from the seventeenth century on, the Russian tsar would eventually secure a treaty with the Ottoman sultan in 1775, which allowed Russia to act as the official protector of the Orthodox Church in the entire Ottoman Empire. News of the glorious deeds and the magnificent court of Tsar Alexis of Russia (r. 1645–76) had reached the Patriarchate of Antioch through visitors and correspondence. On his visit to the Antiochian diocese and the area of Jerusalem in 1642 and again in 1651, Macarius III ascertained the European rulers' concern for the Middle Eastern Christians, evidenced by their donations and support. On his return to Damascus after his seven-year-long journey to Europe, the patriarch would bring enough funds to cover the immediate needs of his diocese, pay the debts of the patriarchate, carry out urgent repairs, and generally improve the life of his parishioners. Moreover, he brought with him important Greek works that he would subsequently translate and adapt into Arabic for the benefit of many generations of Middle Eastern Christians.[12]

Paul of Aleppo and the Syrian delegation left Aleppo on July 9, 1652, spent ten weeks in Constantinople, and reached the Romanian lands in January 1653, arriving in the port of Constanța by boat, across the Black Sea. After a first trip through Moldavia, which lasted until November, they spent several months in Wallachia (present-day southern Romania) and in June 1654 headed for Kiev, in the "Cossacks' lands" (Ukraine). They reached Moscow on February 2, 1655, and left it after fourteen months, only to return at the tsar's request and spend another two months there, in April–May 1656.* Their sojourn in Russia also included Kolomna and Novgorod. Back in Moldavia in August 1656, they spent two months in the capital, Iaşi, and neighboring areas and then visited the monasteries of Wallachia. They traveled to Bucharest and were hosted by the newly appointed prince of Wallachia, Mihnea III Radu (r. 1658–59), with whom Patriarch Macarius

* The reason was political: the tsar wished Patriarch Macarius to attend and confirm his negotiations with Moldavia, which resulted in a document dated May 17, 1656, also signed, to give it more authority, by three patriarchs: Nikon of Moscow, Macarius of Antioch, and Paisios of Jerusalem.

established a long-term connection.[13] Forced to delay their departure by the Ottoman military campaign in Transylvania and the Tatars' attacks, they left the Romanian territory on October 13, 1658, sailing south along the coasts of Dobruja and Bulgaria. They stopped in Sinope in November for the winter. In the spring they crossed Anatolia, reaching Aleppo in April 1659. They were back in Damascus on July 1, 1659. The Syrian delegation had been away from home for almost seven years.

Despite the undeniable value of this outstanding travel journal, acknowledged as a real gem of Christian Arabic literature, no complete and accurate edition, or translation, of it has been published yet.[14] The fullest and most reliable copy (622 pages long) seems to be the manuscript *Arabe 6016*, which dates from the end of the seventeenth century and belongs to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris). The edition and French translation by the Romanian priest Basile Radu (published in 1930–49) covers a third of the Paris copy. The most consistent but least-known translation is the Russian nineteenth-century version by Georgij A. Murkos, who used the Moscow manuscript (from which, however, the first part of the journal is missing). The most frequently cited translation is the faulty, abridged English version of Francis C. Belfour (London, 1829–36), which is based on the copy of the British Library. The translator confesses in the preliminary pages: "It has been impossible satisfactorily to 'decipher' some of the Greek words: I have been surprised at the hallucination which their Arabic appearance has sometimes occasioned me." He also complains about the "perpetual recurrence of Church Ceremonies" and, to account for his condensed version, asserts "the weariness of those who shall undertake to read them, from the aversion, which our English habits and pure practices of religion produce in us, to the tedious forms of unmeaning and superstitious ceremonial."[15] A new, complete English translation would therefore also need to include the countless passages omitted in Belfour's outdated version.

The sections presented below follow the itinerary that the Syrian delegation took after leaving Damascus: to Constantinople, Moldavia and Wallachia, then on to Moscow, and back to the Romanian lands, with a final excerpt concerning Wallachia. The selected fragments focus on descriptions of outstanding church buildings and portraits of historical personalities, including the majestic and controversial figure of Nikon, the seventh patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church.*[16]

* Patriarch Nikon introduced radical reforms of church ritual and liturgical books to make them conform to contemporary Greek practice. His reforms were opposed by the so-called "Old Believers," who defended such traditional Russian practices as, for instance, making the sign of the cross with two rather than three fingers. The dissent of the Old Believers and their subsequent persecution

The translation below is based on the Paris manuscript, compared with two others from the British Library in London (OMS Add 18427–30) and the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg (MS B1230). Paul did not divide his journal into chapters, but helpful marginal notes are added here and there, allowing for a certain inner structure to be traced. In view of the many fascinating adventures that the Syrian travelers had in European lands and the wealth of data presented in this journal in a most agreeable style, the excerpts below allow the reader to catch only a glimpse of the large-scale picture of post-Byzantine Orthodox communities that Paul Ibn al-Zaʿim masterfully recorded.[17]

Translation

A. Preparation for the Voyage

In the name of the Father, the One, the Eternal, without beginning or end, whose help we beseech. [. . .] I, the humble servant and most needy of the Lord my God's mercy, called Paul the *arshidiyakon*, i.e., [arch]deacon* of the Orthodox of Aleppo, am the son by blood of the eminent, most holy, righteous and generous father Kyr Kyr† Macarius, the patriarch of Antioch, son of the late Father Paul, son of Father ʿAbd al-Masih, the famous ancestor of the Al-Zaʿim family. [. . .] After he was entrusted with the office of Metropolitan of Aleppo and held it for twelve years, he was appointed to the Petrine See of the Patriarchate of Antioch,‡ a noble office, established at this time in the city of Damascus in Syria. He was in charge of it for some time, governing all matters with his right vision and sound resolve, until the hand of Fate directed him toward the remotest countries, villages, and islands.

[He went] not for the sake of enjoyment of wandering and travel, but forced by the deep trouble and poverty of those times, compelled to do it, and not of his own choice. This [occurred] when the debts of the said See, overdue since the times of the late, eminent Patriarch [of Antioch] Kyr Euthymios of Chios,§[18] had increased and multiplied with interest to the point

by the authorities caused a deep schism in the Russian church, which remains unhealed to this day.

* Paul first uses the Greek ecclesiastical term and then the Arabic equivalent.

† "Kyr Kyr" is an abbreviation of the Greek expression "the lord of lords," which is the official title of a patriarch as head over bishops. "Kyr" ("lord") can be used for patriarchs, bishops, or secular authorities.

‡ It is believed that the apostle Peter founded the see of Antioch before the see of Rome.

§ Euthymios III of Chios, "the Magnanimous"—the last patriarch of Antioch (1634–47) before the installation of Macarius III Ibn al-Zaʿim.

where, having reached a huge amount, the congregation could not cover them anymore. At this time he grew concerned and became exceedingly worried about this terrible misfortune, and he was anxious, hoping to [find] rescue from these dire straits. He did not find any means towards this, nor did he find help from anyone, or any way [out]. Hence, he took the road of patience and perseverance, with much toil and weariness, and decided to take the hard road that leads, along difficult paths, to the sweet-water springs, even the deep, open seas. [By this] I mean men gifted with virtues and noble features who respond to the pleas of the needy and repay the deprived. They are the God-assisted and triumphant kings, the blessed princes and nobles, famous for their true devotion and sincere faith—may the Lord grant their governance eternal endurance, preserve their rule everlastingly, settle their life, and forever keep the fortune of their stars above! Thus, he [wished] to obtain, out of their overflowing munificence and charity, what he required in order to cover his debts and to help him support his creed.*

I deemed appropriate to be his companion, to share with him the fatigue and hardships of travel and wayfaring. [. . .] We have seen clearly all that we shall be reporting, that is, all that we ascertained during our entire journey and sojourn there, until we returned to our country and wrote it down. [. . .] I gathered—as they say—whatever was within my reach, wishing that it should appear enjoyable to the reader and entertaining to his spirit. May the Almighty Creator be praised by all who will listen to it†[19] or read it, once they understand the pleasant stories and events collected here! May Christians make good profit of it, when hearing about the fine ways and conduct of those believers, their deep devotion to the Lord's dutiful obedience, their striving to a perfect understanding of fasting, their continuous prayers, their faith and virtuous behavior, their pure mind, heart, and soul—in short, all that we shall report and shed light on hereafter, for this is what we have seen with our own eyes and shall describe [below]. [. . .]

When our father, the said patriarch, saw the increase and multiplication of debts upon the See of Antioch and the constant growth of interest that had accumulated until that day, he summoned all the Christians of Damascus, priests and clergy, and consulted them. He agreed with them at that time to head for the countries of Christendom in order to achieve his purpose. At this time Prince Vasile, the ruler of Moldavia,‡ wrote and invited him to come for a visit, promising to help him and pay all his debts and obligations,

* This is a play on words in Arabic: *dayn*, "debt" / *din*, "creed," "faith."

† Since proficiency in Arabic reading was mostly the privilege of clergy and clerks, books were often read out loud in medieval Syria.

‡ Vasile Lupu—prince of Moldavia in 1634–53.

for he used to do good deeds of this sort: he had covered the debts of the Holy Sepulchre, the Constantinopolitan See, and the Patriarch[ate] of Alexandria. Hence, everybody agreed to this. He chose the aforementioned Sylvester, whom he had ordained priest, to be his deputy and fill in for him [during his travels], and left Damascus on Thursday, February 11 [1652], year 7160 from Creation and 1062 from the Hijra.[20]

B. Sojourn in Constantinople

We entered the city of Constantinople on Wednesday, October 20 [1652], in the morning. [. . .] While [Patriarch Macarius] was paying his devotion to the icons on the altar doors [in the patriarchal church, dedicated to Saint George], the patriarch of Constantinople came down and entered the church, robed in his vestments.* He sat on his throne, and our father the patriarch sat down on a throne across from him. The deacon said, "Have mercy on us, O God, in Thy great mercy!"[21] as usual and commemorated Alexis, emperor of Moscow, and the empress Maria, Vasile, prince of Moldavia, and his wife Catherine, Matthew, prince of Wallachia, and his wife Helen, then His All-Holiness Paisios, the patriarch of Constantinople, and His All-Holiness Macarius, the patriarch of Antioch. The chanters intoned *Kyrie eleison* three times for each of them. [. . .]

On Tuesday, November 2, [the Muslim] Feast of the Sacrifice,† we went together to the gate of the [Topkapı] Palace and watched His Majesty Sultan Mehmet (may God preserve him!)‡[22] with his court and troops entering and then leaving Hagia Sophia. We entered it afterwards and visited all its places and secluded retreats. We climbed to the second floor, then the third, and saw its columns of porphyry and antique green, grey, lapis lazuli, and other bright, splendidly colored marbles. We also observed its marble banisters that run from column to column, marked with signs of crosses, the same as on its pavement, marble [slabs] and precious stones, on the inner holy-water basin and its translucent marble jars. Each of these narrow-mouth jars was so large that four people could not fully embrace it. [We admired] the beauty of its white marble, the towering loftiness of its dome, the icon of Christ the Lord blessing from the apex of its high dome, the arches and altar, the multitude of crosses on its walls and banisters, the rows of icons

* Paisios I, metropolitan of Larisa, was elected patriarch of Constantinople in July 1652, dismissed in April 1653, and reelected in March 1654. A year later he left the see because of its overwhelming debts.

† The Muslim holiday that marks the end of the hajj season.

‡ Mehmet IV—Ottoman sultan (r. 1648–87).

and Feasts of the Lord high up on the vault, the large variety of patterns of its gilded, polychrome mosaics, numerous doors, and sheer size of the bronze crosses on top of them, the large number of windows. [. . .] What can I say? It is unthinkable for the human mind to describe each and every one of its splendors! [. . .]

From there we went and visited the mosque of the late Sultan Ahmet, who was famous for his obstinacy. Its pavement is made of cut, unpolished marble. Afterwards we admired the world-famous attraction of Constantinople, the *At Meydanı*, that is, the Hippodrome. We saw something wonderful in front of [the Sultan Ahmet mosque], up on a pedestal: the new *Dikilitaş*.* This is a rectangular, grey-red, monolithic stone. It is carved on all four sides with philosophical figures, shapes, and reliefs of animals, all of these being philosophical symbols.†[23] It rests on four cubic bronze blocks, and below [it] there is a square white marble slab, in one piece, measuring fourteen spans on all sides—length, width, and height—also carved on all four sides with figures of people, different on each face. Its height from base to pinnacle, that is, the column and the pedestal, equals that of the minarets of the Sultan Ahmet Mosque.

At a stone's throw from this wonder there is a column of solid bronze, made of three intertwined [pillars] like three serpents or snakes, twisted around one another. On top of it there are three serpents' heads, stretched with their mouths gaping at the city, in three directions.‡ The jaw of one [serpent] is broken: they claim that the late Sultan Osman§ broke it with a staff. It has granted protection from serpents since the time of the Emperor Constantine, for they never enter the city. They said that when that jaw was broken serpents came to the city from that direction, but they were not harmful. [. . .]

We went from there to visit the tombs of the late sultans, i.e., the Ottomans, from their conquest of Constantinople to this day, including the tomb of Sultan Murat¶ and his nineteen children, all strangled,** and the tomb of

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* This is the Turkish name (lit. "upright stone") of the famous "Obelisk of Theodosius" (an ancient Egyptian obelisk transported to Constantinople in the fourth century CE).

† It was a common belief in Paul's time that the Egyptian hieroglyphs were symbolic representations of philosophical truths.

‡ In a mutilated form (without the serpents' heads), the "Serpent Column" (originally a sacrificial tripod from the Ancient Greek temple in Delphi) is still standing on the Hippodrome today.

§ Osman II—Ottoman sultan (r. 1618–22).

¶ Murat IV—Ottoman sultan (r. 1623–40).

** In Ottoman times the Sultan's rule was hereditary, and one of his sons, not always the eldest, became his successor. Even before the Sultan's demise, domestic wars broke out in support of one or another son, and the defeated ones were imprisoned or more often strangled (usually with a silk bowstring) in order to secure the peaceful transition of power to the succeeding heir.

his mother Kösem. We wandered around their tombs. Above them there are amazing golden lamps and decorations. [. . .] Then we went and visited the *Aslanhane*, a lower old church with a second one above it and a lofty dome.*[24] A few remains of figural mosaics of our Lady and the four Evangelists are preserved to this day. In the lower church wild animals can be seen: four lions (some from Algeria, others from our country), four panthers from different countries, a jackal, a fox, three wolves, a hyena, an old elephant head, an old figure of a giraffe, and an old crocodile. Inside this lower church old icons and figural mosaics are also preserved. It is dedicated to Saint John the Baptist and it is very famous [because] they maintain that this was the very church of [Saint John] Chrysostom.† [. . .]

Then we went and visited the famous grand mosque Süleymaniye, considered one of the wonders of the world due to the multitude of its porphyry and pistachio-green columns, its vast polychrome pavement, its height, and its slender minarets. In the courtyard there is a high marble dome with similar columns and water springing from the top, for these columns are hollow and water flows out of them by an ingenious system. It is more agreeable and sweeter than the water of Aleppo. [. . .] Then we came out [. . .] and climbed to the *Okmeydanı*, that is, "the Arrow-shooting Field," for there is a pillar erected there for this purpose. It is a pleasant green field with a [good] view of Constantinople, for it is right opposite [the city]. Christians celebrate Easter here in joy and happiness. They told us that day that the previous year His Majesty Sultan Mehmet (may God preserve him!) had a tent erected for him, prior to the feast, and enjoyed watching them. He was so well entertained that he offered them two purses, each filled with a thousand Ottoman piastres. [. . .]

Let me tell you that we saw in all the churches of Constantinople and the neighboring area that they paint on the northern altar door a red-footed cherub holding a fiery lance or the Archangel Michael, a dead man at his feet. As to the church doors of Moldavia, Wallachia, and the Cossacks' lands, there they also paint on the southern door the icon of the Archdeacon Stephen, holding the censer. Second, you cannot know the saint to whom the church is dedicated, except from his icon placed on the church door, up on the wall. Third, there is his icon inside, on the Lady's right. Fourth, there is one dedicated to the Lord's feast, or to the saint whose feast is celebrated, which is kept on the lectern until the weekend, so that everyone who enters venerates it. Fifth, there are silver lamps hanging before the iconostasis

* The *Aslanhane* (lit. the "Lion House") is the Byzantine church of Christ Chalkites, which in Ottoman times served as a menagerie.

† John Chrysostom was archbishop of Constantinople in 398–404.

and the altar door, always burning. Six, the iconostasis is complete.* Seven, instead of blessed bread, they bring in the evening a choice of plates of koliva,† in various colors and shapes, with splendid decorations of flowers. At the end of the service, priests pray upon them for the deceased's soul and then distribute them with wine, bread, and caviar. Eight, the additional oil that is brought by a baby's godparents, for they have majestic baptism celebrations, because our Greek brethren celebrate baptism as a great event and spend a lot of money, bringing to church massive candles and the like, for all those present. [. . .]

On the eve of the Sunday of the Fathers‡ [falling on December 19, 1652] we attended Vigils here [at the church of Therapia].§ Then our father the patriarch celebrated Liturgy here on Sunday morning and consecrated holy oil, and we read from four Gospels, in Persian, Turkish, Arabic, and Greek, as is our custom.

C. First Sojourn in Moldavia and Meeting with Prince Vasile Lupu

That afternoon we reached Ghalantz, that is, Galați, where the domain of Moldavia begins. [. . .] We entered the city of Iași, [capital] of Moldavia, on Tuesday evening, January 25 [1653]. At that moment all the monasteries and churches rang their bells, which resulted in a great clamor. [. . .]

On Tuesday morning, February 8 [1653], the feast of Saint Theodore Stratelates, His Highness the Prince [Vasile Lupu] sent word to our master the patriarch that he should get ready to go visit him. Towards noon, the said *sluger*¶[25] appeared in a carriage called in their language *sanie*, that is, a sleigh without wheels, for it had snowed heavily and it was very cold, so the ordinary carriage with wheels could not advance while this one slid swiftly and smoothly. Again, soldiers were marching in front.

We entered the palace and [the prince] met him in the inner hall, by himself. [The patriarch] handed him letters from the patriarchs of Constantinople

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* That is, it entirely conceals the altar.

† A dish made of boiled wheat, with sugar, walnuts, and other ingredients depending on local customs (cinnamon, fennel, bonbons, ground sugar topping, etc.).

‡ This is the last Sunday before Nativity, when the ancestors of Christ according to the flesh are commemorated.

§ Therapia (present-day Tarabya neighborhood of Istanbul) is a picturesque resort on the European side of the Bosphorus with a healthy, "therapeutic" air—hence the name.

¶ Iane, son of Pârvan, the *Sluger* (= Turkish *Kasab-başı*, an official formally in charge of the meat provisions at court), was a trusted attendant of Prince Vasile Lupu.

Paisios and Ioannikios, the deposed,* and the patriarch of Jerusalem, all recommending him. Every time the secretary finished reading a letter, [the prince] rose from his throne and raised his *kalpak* [out of respect].† Then our master the patriarch presented him with a splendid gift: the lower jaw of Saint Basil the Great—yellow, hard, and firm, shining like gold, its perfume more fragrant than amber. [. . .] Seeing this, the prince marveled and greatly rejoiced when our master the patriarch said: "This is in your name,‡ may it protect you!" [. . .] The prince was much endeared towards our master the patriarch. [. . .]

As for the prince's stateliness, knowledge, excellence, and beautiful mind, his study of books—old, new, and Turkish—and his conversation, it is impossible for the human mind to encompass them all. He was truly like one of the Byzantine kings of old, or even surpassed them, for his word was mighty all around the world owing to his great generosity and good deeds towards patriarchs, clergy, monks, ordinary people, churches, and monasteries. Moreover, aghas, merchants and other Turks, preachers and townsmen would swear by his head [out of respect], although he was quite often angry with them. I simply cannot collect all these facts here. Suffice it to say that he was famous all over the world; the emperors of Moscow and their noblemen felt blessed by his letters and treated his messenger with much respect because they had heard that he loved to build churches and monasteries and to be on good terms with everyone. The king of the Poles, his noblemen, and Khmelnytsky the Cossack§ married his daughters, while the khan and the Tatars [respected him] even more, and so did the emperor of Austria, the king of Hungary, and as far away as Venice. During his reign he ordered many prints to be established in his country Moldavia: liturgies, theological books, and commentaries, in the Romanian language.[26] For his people had read at first in Serbian, that is, in Russian, because from Bulgaria and Serbia to Wallachia and Moldavia, then further on to the Cossacks' lands and Muscovy, everyone reads in Serbian, which is the language of all their books.¶ However, the language spoken by the people of Moldavia and

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* Ioannikios II, metropolitan of Herakleia, had four tenures as patriarch of Constantinople: November 1646–October 1648, June 1651–June 1652, April 1653–April 1654, and March 1655–July 1656. In 1654 he was imprisoned because of the debts of the patriarchate to the Ottoman Porte.

† Turkish name for the round cap made of black leather and expensive fur, usually worn by the prince and the court dignitaries, in the Ottoman fashion.

‡ Saint Basil was prince Vasile Lupu's patron saint.

§ Bohdan Khmelnytsky—the "hetman" (political and military leader) of the Ukrainian Cossacks in 1648–57.

¶ By "Serbian" Paul evidently means Church Slavonic.

Wallachia is Romanian, so they did not understand what they were reading. Therefore, he built a great school made of stone next to his monastery and printed for them books in their own language. Serbs, Bulgarians, Cossacks, and Muscovites speak the same language, sometimes with variations, but the way they write is the same.

D. The Church of the Three Hierarchs

On Saturday, the abbot of the prince's monastery dedicated to the Three Patriarchs [*sic*] invited our master the patriarch.** [. . .] [The monastery] is unique and wonderful, like a citadel, surrounded by stone walls. Above the gate there is a bell tower and the town clock, all made of iron, with large wheels. [. . .] The holy church lies in the center of the monastery. It is built entirely of carved stone, while the outside walls are entirely worked with exquisite artistry, amazing to the mind.[27] There is no spot on the wall not carved and decorated, below the girdles and two other bands of carved black stone. It has two high domes. The access is through two doors, as is usual in their churches, to the south and the north. Above each door there is a very tall, narrow window with an upper pane. [. . .] This nave is in the shape of a cross. On the ceiling there is an image of the Trinity, while above the western church door there is an image of the Last Judgment, [. . .] with Turks in groups, wearing their assortment of garments, turbans, and high-crowned caps.

On the remaining stretch of the wall, there are images of "Let everything that has breath [praise the Lord]"[28] and of every one of the various creatures of the world: men, beasts, wild animals, birds, trees, and plants, all together, astonishing the viewer. Then "Praise the Lord in his saints,"[29] with tambourines and pipes, young men and old, all children of man, with musicians according to their ranks.[30] Then "[All of creation] rejoices in thee [O full of grace],"†† with virgins, kings, and judges according to their ranks. Everything is [painted] with gold and lapis lazuli. Then you access the western church door and above it the Three Patriarchs [*sic*] are painted. The door, iron-clad and splendidly carved, leads to the narthex. Recesses in its walls

** The Church of the Three Hierarchs is the greatest architectural creation of Vasile Lupu's reign, commissioned by him and built in 1635–39 with help from foreign craftsmen of exceptional talent. It hosts the tombs of Vasile Lupu and his family, and Princes Alexandru Ioan Cuza and Dimitrie Cantemir. The three hierarchs are Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom. Paul mistakenly refers to them as the "three patriarchs."

†† Iconographic version of the hymn to the Mother of God, sung during the Liturgy of Saint Basil.

enclose the tombs of the prince's children with the lady, his first wife. [. . .]

On the southern wall, to the right of the prince's throne, there is a wide arcade resting on splendidly carved white marble pillars, where one also climbs marble steps. In the center there is a chest, all covered in red velvet fixed with silver nails, with a marvelous lock that they opened for us. We kneeled and paid our devotion to the relics of Saint Paraskevi the Bulgarian or "the New," which [the prince] had sent for and brought over from the patriarchal church in Constantinople, from the reliquary where saintly women's relics are preserved (which we had venerated [during our stay there], as mentioned before). [. . .] She looks as if alive, all covered in veils and silk, and the like. Above her, silver and gold lamps are hanging, burning day and night. On the arched wall her torments, her burial place, and the episode when the Turks delivered her [relics to the prince] are all depicted. It was magnificent, for when the high clergy brought her [to the prince he] ordered his attendants to accompany them, as a sign of great veneration, and for his glory too.*[31] [. . .]

There is not one church in Moldavia, Wallachia, or the Cossacks' lands similar to this one, no carvings as beautiful as these here, for it overwhelms the watcher's mind. May God preserve it unto the ages of ages! Its silver chandeliers, curtains all embroidered with pearls, garments, *phelonia* and *sticharia*,† chalices, lamps, and all church items are priceless. The inner and the outer pavements are made of white and black marble. All the buildings in this monastery—cells, rooms, and refectory—have arched stone ceilings. A little further, near the baths, lies the great school that the prince built on the bank of the wide lake or *heleșteu*, that is, the fishpond. [. . .]

They said that in this city of Iași there are thirty churches and monasteries. It is an agreeable city; its air and its water are very sweet and pleasant, better than anywhere else in this country. [. . .] His Highness the prince sent [the patriarch] a message in the evening, as was his custom, to prepare for worship at the Lady's church [. . .]. We went there, entered the church, put on our vestments, and helped him vest, as accustomed. We venerated a large gilded cross that enclosed a flawless black piece of the Holy Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was donated to the Holy Mountain,‡ and they

* Saint Paraskevi (or Parascheva) the New is one of the Orthodox saints that Macarius and Paul had not known about, and seeing her relics made a strong impression on the patriarch. He included the story of her life in one of his subsequent works. The relics were removed following a fire in 1884. They are now housed in a special hall next to the Metropolitan Cathedral of Iași, where huge processions take place every year on October 14, Saint Paraskevi's feast day.

† Two types of liturgical vestments.

‡ Mount Athos in northern Greece—the location of a network of Orthodox monasteries.

lent it to be placed in this monastery, because the prince gave these two of his monasteries in possession of the Holy Mountain, so their abbots and monks came from there. [. . .] Four metropolitans attended that day: the regular court bishop; the metropolitan of Sofia; Vlasios, the metropolitan of Naupactus in the Morea;* and a bishop from Georgia, recently arrived from Moscow.

E. Sojourn in Russia: Moscow

Then we crossed the last border of the Cossacks' country and reached the banks of the deep river Seym, the foremost border of Muscovy. [. . .] We entered at that time, O reader, a second episode of exertion, toil, labor, and fasting, for everyone in this country, ordinary people as well as monks, eat only once a day, even in the summer, because they never come out of the church service until around the eighth hour [i.e., 2 p.m.], sometimes half an hour later, and all their churches are thoroughly deprived of seats. After the service they say the prayer of the ninth hour. And all this time they stand like statues, planted in the ground and silent, only bowing for *metania*s,† for they are used to keeping quiet and not growing tired. We were astonished, while among them, as we would always leave church with our feet barely carrying us, for we were weary of constant standing, without ever sitting down. Every day at Matins they must always read three *anagnoses*, or lectures from Gospel exegesis, and a few others from the *Paterikon*,‡ while at nightfall, after Vespers, they must absolutely follow the canon of *kathimeron*.§ [. . .] We arose on the feast of the Entrance [of the Lord into the Temple, February 2, 1655] and entered the city of Moscow.

F. Meeting Tsar Alexis

On Monday morning, February 12 [1655], the feast of Saint Meletius, Patriarch of Antioch (notice the coincidence!), on that very day the great emperor wished to meet our father Kyr Macarius, the Patriarch of Antioch (Glory to the Lord!), so he sent him the royal sleigh early in the morning. [. . .]

When [the patriarch] entered, with us following him, he advanced

* A city in the Peloponnese, the seat of the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Naupactus and Arta. "Morea" is the medieval and early modern name of the Peloponnese.

† Prostrations to the ground.

‡ A collection of sayings of the Church Fathers.

§ Greek for "daily prayer" or "daily canon."

towards the emperor's elevated throne and, turning to the icons on the wall, quietly said "*Axion estin*,"* as the interpreters had taught him. He bowed to the icons, then to the emperor, who left his throne to welcome him, bareheaded and bowing to the ground. Then he stood up, and our master the patriarch blessed him in the Muscovite fashion: upon his forehead, chest, and shoulders, and then he kissed him on the shoulder, as accustomed. The emperor kissed his head and his right hand, and they stood together. He asked through the interpreter: "Praise God for your wellbeing! How are you, how was your journey, how is your health?" Our master the patriarch answered appropriately, in profuse prayers, ingratiating himself to him, and [the emperor] entreated him to sit down. [. . .]

The emperor went and examined all [the patriarch's presents], and after each gift was set aside, he went and thanked our master, bowing to him. Our master bowed back and said: "O prosperous emperor, do not blame us, for our country is very far and we have been away from our See for more than three years now. Your reign is glorious, so accept this little as if it were much more." When he heard his statement that he [had been traveling] for more than three years, [the emperor] was very surprised and became very appreciative of him. He thanked him for the gifts, saying: "They are worth to me as much as rich treasures."

Our master spoke in Greek to the interpreter, for as we mentioned before, we had learned it very well when we were amidst their people. This was a great gift from God, for [in Russia] they did not know how to speak Turkish at all and did not even care to hear it, lest their hearing became soiled, as they claimed. All the interpreters told our master never to speak [Turkish] at all. But when he spoke with the interpreter in Greek he would falter a little, for the Greeks speak fast, while we, because we had learned it, could not speak as fast as they would for their tongue is light. So the emperor asked the interpreter: "Why does he not speak fast?" and he said: "Because he learned the language recently.† But he can speak Turkish and if your Majesty so desires, he can speak it." [The emperor] answered: "No, never! Such a saint should not defile his mouth and tongue with that filthy language," for their hatred of the Turks is very strong. At the emperor's court there were seventy interpreters and they knew all the languages, except for Arabic. God granted us knowledge of the Greek language; otherwise we would have been in great trouble.

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* This is a hymn to the Mother of God: "It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos."

† Unlike Paul, Patriarch Macarius learned Greek in his forties; see the introduction to chapter 11.

G. Meeting Patriarch Nikon

On Thursday morning of Cheesefare Week* [February 22, 1655] the Patriarch [Nikon] invited our master and the Serbian [patriarch] to serve the liturgy together in the great church, in memory of the late metropolitans and patriarchs of Moscow. [. . .] At first, this Patriarch Nikon had been a parish priest, but he left his wife and became a monk, then for a while was a *hegumen*, that is, abbot of a monastery. Afterwards the emperor appointed him archimandrite of the monastery of Saint Spas—that is, *Sotiros* in Greek, and in our language, *Al-Mukhallis* ("the Savior")—which is dedicated to the Transfiguration of the Lord.† [. . .] It was in [Nikon's] nature to love the Greek people and their ways. He remained there for three years and then they appointed him metropolitan of the city of Novgorod, that is, "the New City," the first metropolitan see of the Russians, for it is to this very city that the apostle Andrew came to preach. [. . .]

The whole synod agreed that Nikon was to be enthroned patriarch, but he strongly refused until a decree was issued that the emperor would never on any account interfere in church or clerical matters, for the previous emperors had interfered. After this was agreed, he secured an imperial decree that his own word would be binding, without any objection from anyone whatsoever. [. . .] When this happened, things started to go well, and everyone feared him. He continues to be a great leader[32] of the high clergy, the archdeacons, all the priests' ranks, and even state officials. It does not help anyone to plead with him. [. . .] Every time he hears of somebody who has sinned, especially by drinking, he immediately bans that man, for his guards are constantly roaming the city, and when they find a drunken clergyman or monk, they throw him in prison, in utmost disgrace. Hence, we saw his prisons full of them, in the most wretched state, wearing heavy fetters of wooden blocks around their necks and feet. [. . .] And yet, the emperor's and empress's love for him is beyond words.

H. Portrait of Tsar Alexis

They told us that among this emperor's virtues was his habit, on any day of the year when a saint's celebration occurred, if there was a church dedicated to him in the city (for there are churches dedicated to the saints and there are celebrations all around the year, even more [than one a day]), of

* The last week before the Great Lent.

† Spas, Sotir(os), and Mukhallis all mean "savior" in Slavonic, Greek, and Arabic respectively. The monastery mentioned is Novospassky Monastery (the New Monastery of the Savior) in the southeast of Moscow.

going on foot, unwilling to ride, to most celebrations of the major saints, in their dedicated churches, for the sake of their love and devotion. He would stand through the service from beginning to end, bareheaded like a commoner, making frequent bows and kneeling down to the ground before the icon of that particular saint, weeping and sobbing, and he would do this in public. They said that in his own palace, with the empress, he behaved more virtuously than a saint, observing the times of worship and prayer in their chapels, even at night. This is our report of what we heard about him from others, but we also witnessed it with our own eyes.

I. Report on a Moscow Church Service and Patriarch Nikon's Views Concerning Icon Painting

As for us, we were astonished at the truly remarkable rituals and practices that we observed and heard, so we disregarded the weariness, continuous standing, and extreme cold that we endured, owing to the joy brought to us by what we witnessed and heard, and the beauty of the archdeacon's chanting and reading in a low, but fine voice, gentle, sweet, and heartwarming. For they all read like this, and so do the Greeks, not like us in a loud voice. Even the patriarch and the high clergy read only in a low voice, even the deacons' responses—no one hears them except those who are in the nave, for [they use] a gentle, lowered tone. This is their ritual, and how wonderful it is! [. . .]

Then, during his sermon, [Patriarch Nikon] brought forth some new and some old icons, painted by Muscovites who had gradually taken to painting after the Franks' and the Poles' model.* As this patriarch is a great ruler who fervently loves the ways of the Greeks, he sent his followers and they collected such icons from all the houses where they could find them, even from the notables' homes, and brought them to him. [. . .] He had the eyes of those icons pierced and had them taken round the city, borne by guards who announced an imperial decree, saying that whoever painted after that model again, all kinds of punishments would befall him.

This happened while the emperor was away. But since all the Muscovites' love of icons is very great, they do not care for the beauty of the icon, nor for the painters' artistry. They have both beautiful and ugly icons, which they equally honor and always venerate, even if the icon is a mere drawing on a piece of paper or a children's creation. [. . .] This is their custom, as witnessed by us.

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* The term "Frank(ish)" is often used by the author with the meaning "Catholic."

When they saw what the patriarch had done to the icons they thought he had sinned terribly. They shouted and rebelled and called him an enemy of the icons. In the meantime the plague struck them and the sun grew dark, on the afternoon of August 2, so they claimed: "All this befell us because of God's wrath for our patriarch's acts and scorn against icons."*[33] And they were so furious with the patriarch that they tried to kill him. [. . .]

When the emperor went from Smolensk to Vyazma, he sent an order to the Patriarch [Nikon] that he should come to him together with the empress. [. . .] Patriarch [Nikon] had the opportunity to speak that day in the emperor's presence. He preached at length that the manner in which these icons had been painted was not allowed, called on our father the patriarch to bear witness to this, and brought as proof that [these images] followed the model of Frankish icons.[34] They excommunicated and banned all those who would continue painting in this manner and everyone who would keep [such images] at home.

[Patriarch Nikon] took these [icons] in his right hand one by one, presented them to the crowd, and then threw them on the solid pavement of the church so they would break. Then he ordered that they be burnt. However, since the emperor is very religious and in great awe of God, and he was standing bareheaded next to us, quiet, listening intently to the sermon, he said to him in a low voice: "No, father, do not burn them, bury them in the ground." And this they did. [. . .]

Afterwards [Nikon] also preached about the way they made the sign of the cross, for they did not cross themselves as we do, with three fingers together, but the way the high clergy blesses [i.e., with two fingers].† He called our father the patriarch to bear witness to this. On this issue our master had told him that it was not allowed. Now he addressed the hierarchs through the interpreter, saying: "It is in Antioch that those who believed in Christ were [first] called Christians,[35] not anywhere else, so it is there that the rites originated. In Alexandria, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Mount Sinai, the Holy Mountain, even in Wallachia, Moldavia, or the Cossacks' lands, there is no one who crosses himself like that [i.e., with two fingers], but we all do it the same [i.e., with three fingers]."

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* Paul is describing the ominous events following the beginning of Nikon's church reforms, which led to the Russian schism: the solar eclipse on August 2, 1654, and the plague in Moscow and other places in Russia shortly afterwards.

† The question of whether one is to make the sign of the cross with two or three fingers was a key issue in the Russian schism. The former was the old Russian custom, which Nikon sought to change based on contemporary Greek practice.

J. Reform of Liturgical Books

[Nikon] appointed to the office of the cellarer [of the Holy Trinity monastery] the Archdeacon Arsenius,* who had visited our country [Syria] with the Patriarch of Jerusalem and then went on from Aleppo to Georgia. When he reached Moscow, the patriarch and the emperor convened a meeting and sent him to the Holy Mountain, providing him with substantial alms for the monasteries and letters addressed to the abbots telling them to give him as many old Greek books as possible. This is because this patriarch and the emperor loved the Greek rites deeply and they had noticed that, as time passed, changes had occurred in their [Russian liturgical] books. They had heard that the entire book treasury of the Greeks had been collected on the Holy Mountain, so they sent this man to procure from it whatever rare and remarkable books he could find. He obtained from them a diverse collection of around five hundred great books. We had met him by chance while he was passing through Wallachia. Then he went on to Constantinople and searched everything there. [. . .] Finally, he brought all this with him, and the books were placed in the treasury. They have Greek-born interpreters who work to translate them one by one [into Russian], and they print and distribute them, to make them accessible.

K. The Synod Convened by Patriarch Nikon

On that week, the Patriarch of Moscow convened a synod concerning our master's contentions expressed to him and his kind admonitions about the various innovations and shortcomings in the [Russian] creed. First, that they did not perform worship like us on a holy *antimins* painted and inscribed with saints' relics,† but simply on a piece of white linen. Second, that they do not take out of the sacramental host nine pieces, but only four.‡ Third, that they make mistakes in several words of "*We believe in one God*."§ Fourth, that they only kiss icons once or twice a year. Fifth, that they do not

* This is the Russian ecclesiastical writer Arsenius Sukhanov (1600–68), who traveled to Mount Athos, Egypt, Mount Sinai, Jerusalem, Syria, Constantinople, and Georgia to investigate the liturgical differences between the Russian church and other Eastern Orthodox churches and also brought to Russia Greek manuscripts, as discussed below.

† The *antimins* is a piece of cloth with relics of the saints sewn into it, which is placed on the altar table and on which the liturgy is celebrated.

‡ Before the liturgy, bread particles are taken out of the sacramental loaf and placed on the paten next to the "Lamb" (the square piece representing Christ), in commemoration of the Mother of God and the angels.

§ That is, the Nicene Creed. Patriarch Nikon changed some expressions of the creed to make it conform to the Greek usage.

take *antidoron*.* Sixth, that they cross themselves with inappropriate fingers. Seventh, concerning the baptism of the Poles, for they used to baptize them a second time.† [. . .]

Therefore, Patriarch [Nikon] followed the word of our father the patriarch and on this occasion he had the service book of the liturgy translated from Greek into Russian.[36] On this basis, he explained the rituals and sacraments in such clear words that even children could grasp the true rituals of the Greeks. He printed many thousands of these service books and distributed them to the land's churches and printed more than fifteen thousand *antimins*es, inscribed, colored, and sanctified with saints' relics, distributing them throughout the country as well. He corrected many of their errors by means of imperial injunctions and decrees, and mandatory public declarations. [. . .]

As a lover of the Greeks, this patriarch responded with agreement [to the changes], declaring to the high clergy and the other abbots and priests who were present: "I am a Russian, son of a Russian; however, my belief and my faith are Greek." Some of the high clergy answered submissively, saying: "The grace of faith in Christ and all the rites and mysteries of devotion were disclosed to us from the Eastern countries." But others (for there must be some ill-natured and foolish people in every nation) cringed inwardly, muttering to themselves: "We shall not alter our books and rites, which have been handed down to us since ancient times." However, they did not have the power to speak up, for the patriarch's rage was horrendous.

L. Moscow Icon Painting: The Portaitissa

Know that the craftsmanship of the painters in this city has no match in the entire world as regards their skill, the delicacy of their brush, and the precision of their art, for they can make any saint's or angel's icon as small as a pea or a coin, which astonishes the observer. [. . .] They paint the icon of our Lady in countless forms, each with its own name, known to them all: "The Greek"; "[Our Lady] of Sebastia," sitting on a throne; "The Georgian"; "The Arab"; "The Merciful"; *Platytera*, that is, "more spacious than the heavens," where she is placed in the center of the circle of heaven, with the angels; "[Our Lady] of Kazan"; "[Our Lady] of Vladimir"; "[Our Lady] of Smolensk"; "[Our Lady] of Rzhevsk"; "The Burning Bush," as Moses

* Blessed bread, offered after communion.

† In the seventeenth century the standard Greek practice was to receive Catholics into the Orthodox Church by chrismation, without rebaptism. Paul indicates that the Russians insisted on rebaptizing the Catholic Poles who wished to join the Orthodox Church.

saw her; *Hodigitria* or the "Threefold in Guidance"; and many other such forms, each with a different name. The same goes for the icons of the Lord Jesus Christ and those of Saint Nicholas. As for the icons of the Nativity, Easter, the Passions of Christ, His Miracles, and the image of the Trinity, it is impossible for the human mind even to comprehend their meanings and the extent of their [painters'] skill. As for me, I collected many of them, though we could not buy any icon from them without great effort. [. . .]

When [Nikon] was an archimandrite he loved very much the Greek nation and the monks on the Holy Mountain. He had heard that one of the monasteries there was called Iviron, that is, "the Georgians' monastery," famous for a miracle-working icon of our Lady *Portaitissa*, that is, "the Gate-keeper." It was in the possession of a rich widow who held it in the highest regard. This occurred during the reign of the Emperor Leo,* who acted against icons, in the city of Nicea. [. . .] This icon has performed and still performs countless miracles: it is famous all over the world and everyone venerates it.[37] [. . .]

Finally the kings of Georgia, for the sake of their love for this monastery and faith in this icon, and with the Greek emperors' permission, enlarged [the monastery] and erected more buildings. [. . .] At this moment there are more than five hundred monks in residence there. Our Russian and Muscovite brothers love this monastery and all the monasteries on the Holy Mountain in general, because most of their saints went there and were taught its rites. Therefore, while he was the archimandrite of the monastery of Saint Spas [Savior], Patriarch Nikon asked the deputy abbot of the monastery of Iviron that I just mentioned [. . .] to have them paint another one, after the model of that very icon, and bring it to him. [. . .] When the empress heard about it she took it from him, so he asked for another one and they brought it to him at this time, when he is the patriarch. We have seen it and were blessed by venerating it. [. . .] He has adorned it exceedingly. He summoned the most skillful jewellers and covered it entirely in pure gold, together with the whole canvas and clothes, except [our Lady's] face and arms. [. . .] He hung around our Lady's neck an amazing semi-circular lace of emeralds, like a crescent.[38] [. . .] Hence, it has become an extraordinary icon, amazing to the eye and to the mind, unparalleled and unmatched even in the emperor's treasury or his churches, for we saw them all. [. . .] It is for the sake of this icon that he undertook to build a new monastery, rivaling the imperial institutions, on an island in the midst of a wide freshwater lake.†

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* The iconoclast emperor Leo III the Isaurian (r. 717–41).

† This is the Iversky monastery on Lake Valday (Novgorod region), established in 1653. As we learn from another section of Paul of Aleppo's diary, the Patriarch Macarius visited it in August 1655.

M. Precious Books Copied in Wallachia

We had heard that Kyr Constantine Cantacuzino, the *postelnic* of the late Matthew, the Prince of Wallachia,* owned an outstanding and very precious book, one of the books of the imperial library of Hagia Sophia, containing a commentary on the Psalms of David the Prophet, compiled with great exertion by Saint Nicetas, the Metropolitan of Serres, from a selection of works by saints, doctors of the Church, and others. He collected everything that each of them had expounded and assembled everything within a single very large book in Greek, containing around three hundred large-sized pages.†[39]

The learned and righteous Kyr Paisios of Chios, the Metropolitan of Gaza‡[40] (who went from Jerusalem to Aleppo, while we were away on these travels, and preached in the church of Aleppo, as he told us of late) told us that he went to all the Western[41] countries, resided in the great city of Rome for a long time, and searched the pope's library, which contains seventy-two thousand theological and service books in only one copy each, which is a known fact. He said: "I did not find a second copy of this commentary on the Psalms, for it is unique in the world." Many others told us the same thing. There are certainly small individual books of commentaries on the Psalms—that of Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, and of other scholars—but this Saint Nicetas collected all the comments in one single book[. . .].

Many were eager to copy this precious book that had belonged to the imperial collection, but they could not, for two reasons: first, its keeper and owner did not allow them to [do so], lest a second copy emerge; second, because it was so large and oversized. Some began to copy a part of it but grew tired, as we witnessed. When I, the humble chronicler, heard how much this book was praised, I did my utmost [to obtain it] and, by the power of Lord Jesus Christ, helped by my father and the blessing of his prayers, we procured it and brought it to our residence. With God's guidance we found a priest called Papa Yanni of Chios, an excellent Greek calligrapher, very learned and knowledgeable in the profound meaning of words, and asked him to copy it. [. . .] By the power of God he completed it. The said Metropolitan of Gaza wrote for us, as an opening and a conclusion, a few lines

* Matei Basarab, Prince of Wallachia (r. 1632–54). The *postelnic* was the prince's closest attendant, allowed to enter his private chambers and charged with inviting guests in. He was the lowest member of the princely assembly or *divan*.

† Nicetas, the metropolitan of Serres, is the eleventh-century Byzantine writer better known as Nicetas of Heracleia. The manuscript of his *Catena on the Psalms* was acquired by the *postelnic* from the imperial library of the Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

‡ This is Paisios Ligarides (1610–78), a Catholic Greek from Chios, educated in Rome. Despite his Catholic education and allegiance, he was ordained Orthodox metropolitan of Gaza by the patriarch of Jerusalem Paisios I in 1652 but was later anathematized by Paisios's successor, Nektarios.

explaining this event, that is, that this treasure had lain hidden and so forth, and that the Creator sent our father Kyr Macarius, the Patriarch of Antioch, and his son to find it and bring it forth, so as to be granted [heavenly] reward and mercy, and for the benefit of the Christian people, [. . .] for we intended in time, God willing, to send [this work] to be printed in the Franks' lands, to our profit and that of the whole Christian people. We also decided that if, God willing (praise be to him!), this were to happen, we would translate it into Arabic; therefore, we pray to God for peace of mind! [. . .]

We also procured from the said Metropolitan of Gaza another Greek book, *Chresmos*, that is, "The Book of Prophecies," that he had compiled from various countries and multiple works—another unique book, with no second copy. It comprised certain predictions of the prophets, wise men, and saints, concerning the prophecies they had received about events in the Eastern lands brought about by the Hagarenes [i.e., the Muslims], about Constantinople, and their conquest of it—extraordinary stories—and about forthcoming events.[42] [. . .] Whoever studies this precious book wonders in astonishment at its prophecies, apophthegms, and content. In the end the said [Metropolitan] sent us a letter from that [other] country, letting us know that while he was in the Magyars' country* he was robbed and they took from him everything he had, and the said book along with it. Thank God and glory to Him for inspiring us to make a duplicate, for we had it copied, as we reported. Otherwise it would have been lost to the world, and his endeavor in compiling it would have gone to waste. He beseeched us then to transcribe a copy for him. Glory be to God now and forever, and unto the ages of ages, Amen!

Suggested Reading

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* The Magyars are Hungarians. Paul's reference is to the region of Transylvania in present-day central Romania.

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Notes

Abbreviations

ANF = The Ante-Nicene Fathers.

BHG = Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca, edited by François Halkin. 3rd ed. 3 vols. Subsidia Hagiographica 8a. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1957.

CMR = Christian Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, edited by David Thomas et al. 5 vols. to date. Leiden: Brill, 2009–in progress.

CSCO = Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium.

EI2 = Encyclopaedia of Islam. 2nd ed. 13 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1954–2009.

EQur = Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe. 6 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2001–2006.

GCAL = Georg Graf. *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*. 5 vols. Studi e Testi 118, 133, 146, 147, 172. Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944–53.

HMLÉM = Joseph Nasrallah. *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite du Ve au XXe siècle*. 3 vols. in 6 parts (Louvain: Peeters, 1979–89; Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1996).

PG = Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca.

Introduction

1. Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 11.

2. The few examples of even older, pre-Islamic Christian inscriptions and poetry will be discussed below.

3. Aziz Suryal Atiya, *The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), xxii.

4. Of special note are the publishers Maktabat al-Mahabba (Coptic) in Cairo and Dar al-Machreq (Catholic) and Manshurat al-Nour (Orthodox) in Beirut, as well as the presses run by the various Orthodox monasteries of Lebanon. Significant Arab Orthodox websites include www.alboushra.org, www.holytrinityfamily.org, www.archorthotripoli.org, www.alepporthodox.org, and www.mjoa.org, among many, many others.

5. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, 5 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971–89). Theodore Abu Qurra, on whom see chapter 2 below, is mentioned a few times in the second volume.

6. Timothy Ware (Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia), *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 30.

7. Ibid., 134–35.

8. Paul of Aleppo (see chapter 12). He is mentioned three times: ibid., 110, 269, and 273.

9. Ibid., 87.

10. John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 33.

11. John Anthony McGuckin, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 2: 590 (the entry is authored by Justin M. Lasser).

12. In the introduction to this book, Griffith also laments Western ignorance of Arab Christianity—see Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 2.

13. On the term "Arab Orthodox" see Sidney H. Griffith, "The Church of Jerusalem and the 'Melkites': The Making of an 'Arab Orthodox' Christian Identity in the World of Islam, 750–1050 CE," in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa, 173–202 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); cf. Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 139.

14. Today, however, in popular usage the term "Melkite" is used exclusively for members of the Eastern Catholic Byzantine-rite church in the Middle East.

15. On the use of Syriac among the Orthodox in the region of Antioch in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (alongside Arabic, Greek, and Georgian), see Sebastian Brock, "Syriac Manuscripts Copied on the Black Mountain, near Antioch," in *Lingua Restituta Orientalis: Festgabe für Julius Assfalg*, ed. Regine Schulz and Manfred Görg, 59–67 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990). Today use of Aramaic is limited to a handful of Aramaic-speaking villages in Syria, the most famous of which is Maʿlula. Though historically Orthodox, after the schism of 1724, Maʿlula has been a majority Melkite Catholic village, although the monastery of Saint Thekla and its orphanage remain Orthodox.

16. Acts 2:11; cf. David D. Grafton, "The Arabs of Pentecost: Greco-Roman Views of the Arabs and Their Cultural Identity," *Theological Review* 30 (2009): 183–201.

17. Gal. 1:17.

18. Glen W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

19. Alexander Mirkovic, *Prelude to Constantine: The Abgar Tradition in Early Christianity* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004).

20. The *Chronicle of Edessa* mentions "the church of the Christians" during the great flood in Edessa in the year 201. For a discussion of the legend and an evaluation of the historical evidence for Christianity in Edessa, see e.g., Steven K. Ross, *Roman Edessa: Politics and Culture on the Eastern Fringes of the Roman Empire, 114–242 C.E.* (London: Routledge, 2001), esp. 131–36. On the *Doctrine of Addai*, see e.g., Sidney Griffith, "The *Doctrina Addai* as a Paradigm of Christian Thought in Edessa in the Fifth Century," *Hugoye* 6.2 (2003), http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol6No2/HV6N2Griffith.html. Another early example of the Arameo-Arab Christians is provided by the unmercenary physicians Saints Cosmas and Damian (martyred ca. 287). See Irfan Shahid, *Rome and the Arabs: A Prolegomenon to the Study of Byzantium and the Arabs* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984), 155, where he also discusses the Abgarids.

21. Greg Fisher, *Between Empires: Arabs, Romans, and Sasanians in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 34–71; Theresia Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam: Verbreitung und konfessionelle Zugehörigkeit: Eine Hinführung* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007).

22. Irfan Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984), 138–58.

23. Ibid., 552–53.

24. Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 29.

25. Sebastian P. Brock, "The Nestorian Church: A Lamentable Misnomer," *Bulletin John Rylands Library* 78.3 (1996): 23–35; cf. Nikolai Seleznyov, "Nestorius of Constantinople: Condemnation, Suppression, Veneration, with Special Reference to the Role of His Name in East-Syriac Christianity," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 62.3–4 (2010): 165–90. Although Nestorius had nothing to do with the "founding" of this church, by the sixth century it had come to regard his writings as authoritative. The name "Assyrian" came to be applied to the Church of the East much later, under the influence of nineteenth-century Anglican missionaries. For the formation of "Nestorian" identity, see Gerrit J. Reinink, "Tradition and the Formation of the 'Nestorian' Identity in Sixth- to Seventh-Century Iraq," *Church History and Religious Culture* 89 (2009): 217–50.

26. Theresia Hainthaler, "Aufbau der antichalcedonischen Hierarchie durch Jakob Baradai," in Alois Grillmeier et al., *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. 2, part 3, 197–203 (Freiburg: Herder, 2002). We will be using the terms "Jacobite" and "Nestorian" without inverted commas, since, though originally pejorative, these had become the standard terms for these communities in the medieval period, used also by these communities themselves. At the same time, we consciously avoid the term "Melkite"—both because it is no longer used for the Arab Orthodox community in popular usage (but rather exclusively for the Melkite Catholic Church) and because it obscures the fact that the Arab Orthodox were, and are, in communion with the other Orthodox Churches outside the Middle East.

27. Theresia Hainthaler, "The Development of Two Hierarchies," in Alois Grillmeier et al., *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, part 4, 60–88, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975–96).

28. Irfan Kawar [Shahid], "Arethas, Son of Jabalah," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75 (1955): 205–21.

29. Irfan Shahid, *The Martyrs of Najran: New Documents* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1971); René Tardy, *Najrân: Chrétiens d'Arabie avant l'Islam* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1999); Joëlle Beaucamp et al., "La persécution des chrétiens de Nagran et la chronologie himyarite," *ARAM* 11–12 (1999–2000): 15–83; Norbert Nebes, "The Martyrs of Najran and the End of the Himyar: On the Political History of South Arabia in the Early Sixth Century," in *The Qurʾan in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾanic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth et al., 27–59 (Leiden: Brill, 2010). For the Arabic recensions of the story of the martyrs of Najran, see Juan-Pedro Monferrer-Sala, *Redefining History on Pre-Islamic Accounts: The Arabic Recension of the Martyrs of Najrân* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2010); Paolo La Spisa, "Les versions arabes du *Martyre de saint Aréthas*," in *Juifs et chrétiens en Arabie aux Ve et VIe siècles: Regards croisés sur les sources*, ed. Joëlle Beaucamp et al., 227–38 (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2010).

30. Though the church in Najran was almost certainly Miaphysite, the martyr Arethas and his companions are commemorated in the calendar of the Orthodox Church on October 24. Yury Arzhanov, "Zeugnisse über Kontakte zwischen Juden und Christen im vorislamischen Arabien," *Oriens Christianus* 92 (2008): 79–93, esp. 82–85 puts forth an interesting theory that it was specifically Miaphysite Christians who were persecuted in Najran, while the Nestorian Christians were spared, and that the Jewish king Dhu Nuwas was allied with the Nestorians (and with the Persian Sasanian Empire). Nestorian

Christians were indeed present in South Arabia, as evidenced by the fact that already at the end of the fifth century they had their own bishop, Moses of Himyar, who was present at the Nestorian council of Mar Aqaq in 486.

31. King Kaleb of Axum is also commemorated as a saint of the Orthodox Church on October 24, under the name Saint Elesbaan, derived from his regnal name, Ella Asbeha.

32. This cathedral, called in Arabic sources al-Qalis, was later incorporated into the Great Mosque of Sanaʿa.

33. The Christian presence in Najran continued until Christian inhabitants of the city were deported to Mesopotamia by the second Muslim caliph, ʿUmar (r. 634–44), though some sources suggest that Christians continued to live in Najran even after that date.

34. Isabel Toral-Niehoff, "The ʿIbad of al-Hira: An Arab Christian Community in Late Antique Iraq," in *The Qurʾan in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾanic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth et al., 323–47 (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

35. Kirill Dmitriev, "An Early Christian Arabic Account of the Creation of the World," in *The Qurʾan in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾanic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth et al., 349–87 (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

36. This inscription, now lost, is described by the Muslim geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi (d. 1229), who was presumably relying on earlier sources. For the Arabic text of the inscription and a study of its literary importance, see Irfan Shahid, "The Authenticity of Pre-Islamic Poetry: The Linguistic Dimension," *al-Abhath* 44 (1996): 3–30. The examples of the Lakhmid queen Hind and the queen Mavia, mentioned earlier, show that the status of women among the pre-Islamic Christian Arab tribes was quite high. This is also illustrated by the fact that some Lakhmid and Ghassanid kings were known by the names of both their male and female ancestors. For more on the role of elite pre-Islamic Arab Christian women and their sponsorship of churches and monasteries, see Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. 2, part 1 (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 195–201.

37. Sebastian P. Brock, "Syriac Authors from Beth Qatraye," *ARAM* 11–12 (1999–2000): 85–96; John F. Healey, "The Christians of Qatar in the 7th Century A.D.," in *Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth I: Hunter of the East: Arabic and Semitic Studies*, ed. Ian Netton, 222–37 (Leiden: Brill, 2000); John F. Healey, "Patriarch Išoʿyahb III and the Christians of Qatar in the First Islamic Century," in *The Christian Heritage of Iraq*, ed. Erica C. D. Hunter, 1–9 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2009).

38. Hikmat Kashouh has recently discovered evidence for an Arabic translation of the Gospels that appears to have been made prior to the Islamic conquests. This translation, now extant only in a fragmentary and partially redacted form in a Vatican manuscript (Vat. ar. 13), also exhibits evidence of having been initially transmitted orally. See Hikmat Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels: The Manuscripts and Their Families* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 142–71 (esp. 156), 319–24, 384–85, 520–33, and 761 (index). On the Arabic translations of the Bible, see Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

39. Krisztina Szilágyi, "Muhammad and the Monk: The Making of the Christian Bahira Legend," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 34 (2008): 169–214, here 169; Barbara Roggéma, *The Legend of Sergius Bahira: Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); *CMR* 1: 600–603 (Barbara Rog-

géma). This story is perhaps inspired by Qurʾan 16:103: "And We certainly know that they say that a human teaches him, [yet] the language of the one to whom they allude is foreign, while this is clear Arabic language."

40. C. F. Robinson, "Waraḳa b. Nawfal," in *EI2*, 11: 142–43; Ghada Osman, "Pre-Islamic Arab Converts to Christianity in Mecca and Medina," *Muslim World* 95.1 (2005): 67–80.

41. Sidney Griffith, "Syriacisms in the 'Arabic Qurʾan': Who Were Those Who Said 'Allah Is Third of Three' according to *al-Maʾida* 73?" in *A Word Fitly Spoken: Studies in Medieval Exegesis of the Bible and the Quran*, ed. Meir M. Bar-Asher et al., 83–110 (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi, 2007).

42. Gabriel S. Reynolds, *The Qurʾan in Its Biblical Subtext* (London: Routledge, 2010).

43. Qurʾan 5:82.

44. But see the intriguing analysis of C. John Block, "Philoponian Monophysitism in South Arabia at the Advent of Islam with Implications for the English Translation of *thalâtha* in Qur'ân 4.171 and 5.73," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 23.1 (2012): 50–75.

45. The Qurʾanic term *al-samad* probably originally meant "supreme." See Uri Rubin, "al-Samad and the High God: An Interpretation of sura CXII," *Der Islam* 61 (1984): 197–217. Very quickly, however, it was reinterpreted as "solid," "dense," or "compact"—an interpretation that influenced the Greek rendering of the term as *sphyropektos* (in Theodore Abu Qurra) or *holosphyros* (commonly used in Greek Christian polemical literature against Islam). See Christos Simelidis, "The Byzantine Understanding of the Qurʾanic Term *al-Ṣamad* and the Greek Translation of the Qurʾan," *Speculum* 86.4 (2011): 887–913.

46. Qurʾan 4:171.

47. Qurʾan 19:19–22.

48. Qurʾan 2:87, 2:253, 5:110. In the later Muslim tradition, the "holy spirit" is identified as the angel Gabriel.

49. Qurʾan 4:157. On this verse and its interpretation in the Muslim tradition, see Gabriel S. Reynolds, "The Muslim Jesus: Dead or Alive?" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 72.2 (2009): 237–58; Todd Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qurʾan: A Study in the History of Muslim Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009).

50. On Damascus, see Jens Scheiner, *Die Eroberung von Damaskus: Quellenkritische Untersuchung zur Historiographie in klassisch-islamischer Zeit* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

51. Daniel J. Sahas, "The Face to Face Encounter between Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem and the Caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab: Friends or Foes?" in *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, ed. Emmanouela Grypeou, Mark N. Swanson, and David Thomas, 33–44 (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

52. Michael Breydy, ed. and trans., *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios von Alexandrien: Ausgewählte Geschichten und Legenden kompiliert von Saʿid ibn Batriq um 935 A.D.*, 2 vols. (Louvain: Peeters, 1985), 139 (Arabic text) / 118–19 (German translation).

53. Ibid., 141 (Arabic text) / 120 (German translation).

54. This is reported by the ninth-century Muslim historian Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam—see his *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-l-Maghrib*, vol. 1, ed. ʿAbd al-Munʿim ʿĀmir (Cairo: Lajnat al-Bayān al-ʿArabī, 1961), 86. On Benjamin's role in facilitating the Muslim conquest of Egypt, see also fragments of Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē's (d. 845) lost chronicle embedded in Jean-Baptiste Chabot, trans., *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche*

(1166–1199), 4 vols. (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899–1910), vol. 2, book 11, chap. 8, 432–33, and Jean-Baptiste Chabot, ed., *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, 2 vols. (CSCO 81–82; Paris: E typographaei Reipublicae, 1916–20), 1: 251–53; Latin translation: Jean-Baptiste Chabot, trans., *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (CSCO 109; Louvain: Peeters, 1937), 197–98. Cf. Jan J. van Ginkel, "The Perception and Presentation of the Arab Conquest in Syriac Historiography: How Did the Changing Social Position of the Syrian Orthodox Community Influence the Account of Their Historiographers?" in *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, 171–84, at 179.

55. M. V. Krivov, "Otnoshenie sirijskikh monofisitov k arabskomu zavoevaniju" [The Attitude of Syrian Monophysites to the Arab Conquest], *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 55.1 (1994): 95–103.

56. R. H. Charles, *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu, Translated from Zotenberg's Ethiopic Text* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1916), Chapter 121.10, 211: "And now many of the Egyptians who had been false Christians denied the holy orthodox faith and lifegiving baptism, and embraced the religion of the Moslem, the enemies of God, and accepted the detestable doctrine of the beast, this is, Mohammed, and they erred together with those idolaters, and took arms in their hands and fought against the Christians"; cf. *CMR* 1: 209–18 (Gianfranco Fiaccadori), esp. 214.

57. Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 27–28, 32–35; Francisco Javier Martínez, "La literatura apocalíptica y las primeras reacciones cristianas a la conquista islámica en oriente," in *Europa y el Islam*, ed. G. Anes y Álvarez de Castrillón, 143–222 (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2003). On Christian responses more generally, see John C. Lamoreaux, "Early Eastern Christian Responses to Islam," in John Victor Tolan, ed., *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays*, 3–31 (New York: Garland Press, 1996); Alan M. Guenther, "The Christian Experience and Interpretation of the Early Muslim Conquest," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 10.3 (1999): 363–78; Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1997).

58. *CMR* 1: 120–27 (Daniel J. Sahas). A new edition of the *Synodical Letter* has recently appeared: Pauline Allen, ed. and trans., *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy: The "Synodical Letter" and Other Documents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

59. Maximus, *Epistle 14*, *PG* 91, 540A. There is no entry on this important document in *CMR* 1, but see G. I. Benevich, "Khristologicheskaja polemika prepodobnogo Maksima Ispovednika i vykhod Islama na stsenu mirovoj istorii" [Saint Maximus the Confessor's Christological Polemic and the Emergence of Islam], *Gosudarstvo, Religija, Tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom* 3 (2010): 144–50.

60. *CMR* 1: 193–202 (André Binggeli), here 198; cf. Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 28–31.

61. *CMR* 1: 148–50 (Barbara Roggéma); cf. Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 26–27.

62. On these restrictions, which later came to be codified under the name of the "Pact of ʿUmar," see *CMR* 1: 360–64 (Milka Levy-Rubin); David M. Freidenreich, "Christians in Early and Classical Sunni Law," in *CMR* 1: 99–114, esp. 101–9; Antoine Fattal, *Le statut légal des non-musulmans en pays d'Islam* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1995); and now Milka Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: From Surrender to Coexistence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). The "Pact of ʿUmar" will be discussed below.

63. See Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 60–69; cf. Michael Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2005), 230. According to some Muslim jurists, Arab Christians (as opposed to non-Arab Christians) did not qualify as "People of the Book" and *dhimmi*s because they adopted Christianity at a late stage in history, after it had been "corrupted."

64. When asked to adjudicate in disputes between members of different non-Muslim communities, Muslim judges frequently referenced the *hadith*, stating that "all disbelief forms one community," and refused to show preference for one group over another. For an example of how a seventh-century writer of the Church of the East expressed his frustration at Muslim indifference to the inroads made in Iraq by Miaphysites following the conquest, see Morony, *Iraq*, 346: "one of the things Yohannan bar Penkaye complained most bitterly about was the way the new rulers allowed both Nestorians and 'heretics' (Monophysites) to survive the conquest. He particularly deplored the demoralizing consequences of undiscriminating toleration in the reign of Muʿawiya, when 'there was no difference between pagan and Christian; the faithful was not distinct from a Jew.'"

65. Robert Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule: A Historical and Archaeological Study* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

66. In former Sasanian territory, Persian administrative practices were similarly maintained.

67. Oleg Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2006); Andreas Kaplony, *The Haram of Jerusalem, 324–1099: Temple, Friday Mosque, Area of Spiritual Power* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002); Heribert Busse, "Monotheismus und islamische Christologie in der Bauinschrift des Felsendoms in Jerusalem," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 161 (1981): 168–78.

68. Joseph Nasrallah, "De la cathédrale de Damas à la Mosquée Omayyade," in *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam: VIIe–VIIIe siècles*, ed. Pierre Canivet and Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais, 139–44 (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1992); Finbarr Barry Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Making of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Elizabeth K. Fowden, "Sharing Holy Places," *Common Knowledge* 8.1 (2002): 124–46, here 129–34; Nancy A. Khalek, *Damascus after the Muslim Conquest: Text and Image in Early Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 47–49, 92–94, 111–16.

69. See n63 above.

70. Milka Levy-Rubin has recently argued that their strict policies were not altogether exceptional. See her "Shurut ʿUmar: From Early Harbingers to Systematic Enforcement," in *Beyond Religious Borders: Interaction and Intellectual Exchange in the Medieval Islamic World*, ed. David M. Freidenreich and Miriam Goldstein, 30–43 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

71. A. Vasiliev, "The Iconoclastic Edict of the Caliph Yazid II, A.D. 721," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9–10 (1956): 23–47; Sidney H. Griffith, "Christians, Muslims and the Image of the One God: Iconophilia and Iconophobia in the World of Islam in Umayyad and Early Abbasid Times," in *Die Welt der Götterbilder*, ed. Brigitte Groneberg and Hermann Spieckermann, 347–80 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007).

72. Leslie Brubaker, "Representation c. 800: Arab, Byzantine, Carolingian," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 19 (2009): 37–55, esp. 52–55.

73. Gustav E. von Grunebaum, "Byzantine Iconoclasm and the Influence of the Islamic Environment," *History of Religions* 2.1 (1962): 1–10; further references in Griffith, "Christians, Muslims," 351n21.

74. Milka Levy-Rubin, "The Reorganisation of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem during the Early Muslim Period," *ARAM* 15 (2003): 197–226; Levy-Rubin, "The Patriarchate of Jerusalem after the Arab Conquest" [in Hebrew] (PhD diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1994).

75. Milka Levy-Rubin, "The Role of the Judaean Desert Monasteries in the Monothelite Controversy in Seventh-Century Palestine," in *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present*, ed. Joseph Patrich, 282–300 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

76. Sidney H. Griffith, "John of Damascus and the Church in Syria in the Umayyad Era: The Intellectual and Cultural Milieu of Orthodox Christians in the World of Islam," *Hugoye* 11.2 (2008), http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol11No2/HV11N2Griffith.html; Griffith, "'Melkites,' 'Jacobites' and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in Third/Ninth-Century Syria," in *Syrian Christians under Islam: The First Thousand Years*, ed. David Thomas, 9–55 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), esp. 26–34.

77. Andrew Louth, trans., *John of Damascus, Three Treatises on the Divine Images* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003).

78. Andrew Louth, *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 54–83, 155–73.

79. Ibid., 38–53.

80. Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); "John of Damascus," in *CMR* 1: 295–301 (Reinhold F. Glei) and "*The Dialogue between a Saracen and a Christian*," in *CMR* 1: 367–70 (Peter Schadler).

81. Griffith, "John of Damascus," §§21–2, and references given there.

82. Ibid., §22, citing Shlomo Pines, "Some Traits of Christian Theological Writing in Relation to Moslem *Kalam* and to Jewish Thought," in *The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines*, ed. S. Stroumsa, vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1996), [79–99] / 105–25, esp. [86–89] / 112–15.

83. Louth, *St. John Damascene*, 256–57.

84. A new book surveys the relevant material: Cécile Cabrol, *Les secrétaires nestoriens à Bagdad (762–1258 AD)*, Beirut: CERPOC, 2012 (not seen).

85. David Thomas, *Early Muslim Polemic against Christianity: Abu ʿIsa al-Warraq's against the Incarnation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6.

86. Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early Abbasid Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th Centuries)* (London: Routledge, 1998); Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 106–28. Almost all the translators were Christians. Thabit ibn Qurra, who was a pagan from Harran, is the only notable exception.

87. Gutas, *Greek Thought*, 1.

88. D. M. Dunlop, "The Translations of al-Bitriq and Yahya (Yuhanna) b. al-Bitriq," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1959): 140–50; Françoise Micheau, "Yaḥyā or Yūḥannā b. al-Biṭrīq," in *EI2*, 11: 246.

89. Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the "Theology of Aristotle"* (London: Duckworth, 2002). The confessional identity of ʿAbd al-Masih ibn Naʿima is open to question: he could have been an Orthodox Christian, a Miaphysite, or a Maronite.

90. On Qusta ibn Luqa, see *CMR* 2: 147–53 (Mark N. Swanson); on Nazif ibn Yumn, see *CMR* 2: 464–68 (Mark N. Swanson).

91. Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); Bulliet, *Islam: The View from the Edge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi, eds., *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990).

92. Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 35–36; cf. Griffith, *Syriac Writers on Muslims and the Religious Challenge of Islam* (Kottayam: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1995), 6.

93. Rachid Haddad, "La phonétique de l'arabe chrétien vers 700," in *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam*, 159–64; Bruno Violet, "Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment aus Damaskus," *Orientalistische Litteratur-Zeitung* 4 (1901): 384–403, 425–41, 475–88 [revised reprint: Berlin, 1902]; see also Andreas Kaplony's still unpublished research "The Greek Orthography, and the Pronunciation, of First Century Hidjra Arabic: The Arabic and the Greek Documentary Evidence Combined," presented on July 5, 2009, at the 11th International Colloquium "From Jahiliyya to Islam," Jerusalem.

94. Sidney H. Griffith, "The Monks of Palestine and the Growth of Christian Literature in Arabic," in his *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth-Century Palestine* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992), Essay III, 5. For more on the linguistic situation in the monasteries of Palestine, see Griffith, "From Aramaic to Arabic: The Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods," in his *The Beginnings of Christian Theology in Arabic* (Aldershot: Variorum, 2002), Essay X.

95. Sidney H. Griffith, "Anthony David of Baghdad, Scribe and Monk of Mar Sabas: Arabic in the Monasteries of Palestine," in his *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth-Century Palestine* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992), Essay XI, 10–11.

96. Sidney H. Griffith, *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth-Century Palestine* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992); Griffith, *Beginnings of Christian Theology in Arabic* (Aldershot: Variorum, 2002); Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 45–74; Milka Levy-Rubin, "Arabization and Islamization in the Palestinian Melkite Community during the Early Muslim Period," in *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land, First–Fifteenth Centuries CE*, ed. Arieh Kofsky and Guy G. Stroumsa, 149–62 (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi, 1998); Kate Leeming, "The Adoption of Arabic as a Liturgical Language by the Palestinian Melkites," *ARAM* 15 (2003): 239–46.

97. Sebastian Brock, "From Qatar to Tokyo, by Way of Mar Saba: The Translations of Isaac of Beth Qatraye (Isaac the Syrian)," *ARAM* 11–12 (1999–2000): 475–84; Brock, "Syriac into Greek at Mar Saba: The Translation of St. Isaac the Syrian," in *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church*, 201–8; Tamara Pataridze, "Les *Discours Ascétiques* d'Isaac de Ninive: Étude de la tradition géorgienne et de ses rapports avec les autres versions," *Le Muséon* 124.1–2 (2011): 27–58. A critical edition of the Greek translation of Isaac is now available: Marcel Pirard, ed., *Abba Isaak tou Syrou Logoi Asketikoi, kritike ekdosi* (Mount Athos: Iviron Monastery, 2012).

98. That this literature was clearly intended for use within the local Arab Orthodox community is evidenced by the nonstandard Arabic of the texts. The peculiarities of this Arabic are cataloged in Joshua Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic, Based Mainly on South-Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium*, 3 vols. (Louvain: Peeters, 1966–67).

While Blau misleadingly refers to the language of these texts as "Christian Arabic," it is more adequate to describe it as the literary dialect of the Orthodox monasteries of Palestine in the ninth century. Unfortunately, some scholars have taken Blau's *Grammar* as descriptive—and even worse, prescriptive—of what all pre-modern Christian Arabic must be like.

99. *CMR* 1: 791–98 (Mark N. Swanson) and references given there.

100. Sidney H. Griffith, trans., *Theodore Abu Qurrah: A Treatise on the Veneration of the Holy Icons* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997); John C. Lamoreaux, trans., *Theodore Abu Qurrah* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005); *CMR* 1: 439–91 (John C. Lamoreaux).

101. *CMR* 1: 902–6 (Mark N. Swanson) and references given there.

102. David Bertaina, *Christian and Muslim Dialogues: The Religious Uses of a Literary Form in the Early Islamic Middle East* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2011).

103. For another Arab Orthodox disputation, see Sidney H. Griffith, "*Answers for the Shaykh*: A 'Melkite' Arabic Text from Sinai and the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation in 'Arab Orthodox' Apologetics," in *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, 277–309; *CMR* 1: 661–3 (Eid Salah and Mark N. Swanson).

104. Griffith, *Church in the Shadow*, 147–53; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 336–86. The Arab Orthodox tradition has preserved the memory of hundreds of forgotten saints. Much of this material is available in Archimandrite Tuma Bitar, *al-Qiddisun al-mansiyyun fi al-turath al-Antaki* [Forgotten Saints in the Antiochian Tradition] (Duma, Lebanon: Dayr Mar Yuhanna, 1995).

105. *CMR* 2: 224–33 (Uriel Simonsohn); cf. n52 above.

106. *CMR* 2: 241–45 (Mark N. Swanson). On Qusta ibn Luqa's lost chronicle and its possible influence on Agapius, see Konstantin A. Panchenko, "Kosta ibn Luka (830–912) i ego mesto v arabo-khristianskoj istoriografii" [Qusta ibn Luqa and His Place in Arab Christian Historiography], *Pravoslavnyj Palestinskij Sbornik* 100 (2003): 153–63.

107. *CMR* 2: 657–61 (Mark N. Swanson) and references given there.

108. On the history of the Holy Fire and Muslim attitudes to it, see Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634–1099* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 466–68; Otto Meinardus, "The Ceremony of the Holy Fire in the Middle Ages and To-day," *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 16 (1961–62): 242–53; J. Van Reeth, "al-Qumama et le Qaʾim de 400H: Le trucage de la lampe sur le tombeau du Christ," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, ed. Urbain Vermeulen and Daniel De Smet, 2: 171–90 (Louvain: Peeters, 1998); Gotthard Strohmaier, "Al-Birunis Bericht über das Osterfeuer und den Grabesfelsen in Jerusalem," *Graeco-Arabica* 7–8 (1999–2000): 519–21 [reprinted in his *Hellas im Islam* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 186–7]; the tenth-century text by Nicetas Clericus on the Holy Fire, described in *CMR* 2: 263–65 (Thomas Pratsch); cf. also *CMR* 2: 722; Bishop Auxentios of Photiki, *The Paschal Fire in Jerusalem: A Study of the Rite of the Holy Fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre* (Berkeley, CA: Saint John Chrysostom Press, 1999); Nicholas Egender, "La Sainte Lumière de Pâques," *Irenikon* 77.2–3 (2004): 271–315.

109. Paul Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, 996–1021* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2009); Marius Canard, "La destruction de l'Église de la Résurrection par le calife Hâkim et l'histoire de la descente du feu sacré," *Byzantion* 25 (1965): 16–43 [reprinted in his *Byzance et les Musulmans du Proche Orient* (London: Variorum, 1973), Essay XX]; Thomas Pratsch, ed., *Konflikt und Bewältigung: Die Zers-*

törung der Grabeskirche zu Jerusalem im Jahre 1009 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011). The process of rebuilding began shortly after the church's destruction and not in the 1040s as often claimed. See Martin Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ* (Gloucestershire, UK: Sutton, 1999), 74–81.

110. On the Greek and Arab Orthodox community in Egypt, see Stanley H. Skreslet, "The Greeks in Medieval Islamic Egypt: A Melkite dhimmi Community under the Patriarch of Alexandria (640–1095)" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1987); Youhanna Nessim Youssef, "Melkites in Egypt according to Abu al-Makarim (XII century)," *Parole de l'Orient* 34 (2009): 251–79.

111. *CMR* 5: Addenda (Alexander Treiger), forthcoming. So far only one of his notes has been (very poorly) edited and translated: Adriana Drint, trans., *The Mount Sinai Arabic Version of IV Ezra* (Louvain: Peeters, 1997), xxvi–xxxii.

112. *CMR* 2: 611–16 (John C. Lamoreaux) and references given there. The Arabic text of the life of the patriarch Christopher along with a French translation can be found in Habib Zayat, "Vie du patriarche melkite d'Antioche Christophore (d. 967) par le protospathaire Ibrahîm b. Yuhanna: Document inédit du Xe siècle," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 2 (1952): 11–38, 333–66. An important emendation to the closing paragraph of this text is found in Joseph Nasrallah, "Deux auteurs melchites inconnus du Xe siècle," *Oriens Christianus* 63 (1979): 75–86.

113. Among Orthodox churches, the patriarchate of Antioch—which in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, had the largest and most culturally diverse canonical territory—was the only one to appoint catholicoi. This was the case with the churches of East and West Georgia before they were granted autocephaly, and prior to the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century, Orthodox catholicosates existed in Baghdad and Romagyris. For the history of the catholicosates of Baghdad and Romagyris and the history of Orthodox Christians in medieval Central Asia, see Wassilios Klein, "Das orthodoxe Katholikat von Romagyris in Zentralasien," *Parole d'Orient* 24 (1999): 235–65; Jean-Maurice Fiey, "Rum à l'est de l'Euphrate," *Le Muséon* 90 (1977): 365–420; Joseph Nasrallah, "Réponse à quelques critiques récentes au sujet des catholicosats melchites de Bagdad et de Romagyris," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 33 (1983): 160–70; Nasrallah, "L'Église melchite en Iraq, en Perse, et dans l'Asie centrale," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 25 (1975): 135–79, 26 (1976): 16–33, 27 (1977): 71–78, 277–93; Jean Dauvillier, "Byzantins d'Asie Centrale et d'Extrême-Orient au moyen âge," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 11 (1953): 62–87; Neophytos Edelby, "Note sur le catholicosat de Romagyris," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 2 (1952): 39–46; Ken Parry, "Byzantine-Rite Christians (Melkites) in Central Asia in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages," in Elizabeth Kefallinos, ed., *Thinking Diversely: Hellenism and the Challenge of Globalisation* (special edition of *Modern Greek Studies [Australia and New Zealand]*, 2012), 91–108.

114. Klaus-Peter Todt, "Region und griechisch-orthodoxes Patriarchat von Antiocheia in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 94 (2001): 239–67; Krijna Ciggaar and David Metcalf, eds., *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean: I. Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of the Crusader Principality* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006); V. V. Krivov, "Araby khristiane v Antiokhii X–XI vv." [Arab Christians in Antioch in the 10th–11th Centuries], in *Traditions and Heritage of the Christian East* (Moscow: Indrik, 1996), 247–55.

115. On the translations from Greek into Arabic in the region of Antioch see *HMLÉM*, III/1: 196–220, 273–310, 387–91. With only a few exceptions (such as the Arabic versions

of the works of Gregory of Nazianzus and Dionysius the Areopagite) the vast body of these translations has been virtually ignored by modern scholarship.

116. Lawrence Conrad, "Ibn Butlan in Bilad al-Sham: The Career of a Travelling Christian Physician," in *Syrian Christians under Islam*, 131–57, esp. 150. See also *HMLÉM*, III/1: 63–65; Joseph Nasrallah, "Couvents de la Syrie du Nord portant le nom de Siméon," *Syria* 49 (1972): 127–59, here 132–53; Wachtang Djobadze, *Archaeological Investigations in the Region West of Antioch-on-the-Orontes* (Stuttgart, 1986), 57–115; D. W. Morray, "The Defences of the Monastery of Saint Simeon the Younger on Samandağ," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 60 (1994): 619–23.

117. Val. V. Polosin, N. I. Serikoff, and S. A. Frantsuzov, *The Arabic Psalter: A Supplement to the Facsimile Edition of Manuscript A187 "The Petersburg Arabic Illuminated Psalter"* (St. Petersburg: Kvarta, 2005); Claudia Ott, "Die Inschriften des Aleppozimmers im Berliner Pergamonmuseum," *Le Muséon* 109.1–2 (1996): 185–226, esp. 193–200.

118. *CMR* 3: 89–113 (Alexander Treiger), with an update forthcoming in *CMR* 5; Samuel Noble and Alexander Treiger, "Christian Arabic Theology in Byzantine Antioch: ʿAbdallah ibn al-Fadl al-Antaki and His *Discourse on the Holy Trinity*," *Le Muséon* 124.3–4 (2011): 371–417.

119. Alexander Treiger, "New Evidence on the Arabic Versions of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*," *Le Muséon* 118 (2005): 219–40; Treiger, "The Arabic Version of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite's *Mystical Theology*, Chapter 1," *Le Muséon* 120 (2007): 365–93; Emily Parker and Alexander Treiger, "Philo's Odyssey into the Medieval Jewish World: Neglected Evidence from Arab Christian Literature," *Dionysius* 30 (2012): 117–46; Cécile Bonmariage and Sébastien Moureau, "*Corpus Dionysiacum Arabicum*: Étude, édition critique et traduction des *Noms Divins* IV, §1–9," *Le Muséon* 124.1–2 (2011): 181–227 and 124.3–4 (2011): 419–59.

120. Michael Tarchnišvili, *Geschichte der kirchlichen georgischen Literatur* (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1955), 182–98; M. Raphava and B. Coulie, "Les colophons d'Éphrem Mtsire et les traductions géorgiennes de Grégoire de Nazianze," *Le Muséon* 104 (1991): 109–24; N. Doborjginidze, "Zur textkritischen Methode georgischer Übersetzer aus Antiochia: Die Problematik von Einleitung, Text und Textempfänger," *Le Muséon* 124.3–4 (2011): 357–70.

121. A vivid eyewitness account of the Seljuk conquest of Antioch is preserved in Michael al-Simʿani's introduction to the Arabic life of John of Damascus. (Like Nikon, Michael al-Simʿani was a monk at the monastery of Saint Simeon the Wonderworker.) See R. D. Portillo, "The Arabic Life of St. John of Damascus," *Parole de l'Orient* 21 (1996): 157–88, esp. 171–73; *CMR* 5: Addenda (Alexander Treiger), forthcoming.

122. Unfortunately, neither the original Greek nor the Arabic translation of either the *Pandectes* or the *Taktikon* has been fully edited. A partial edition of the *Pandectes* in Greek, containing only texts pertaining to canon law, has been published: Carlo de Clercq, "Les *Pandectes* de Nicon de la Montagne Noire" in *Archives d'Histoire du Droit Oriental* 4 (1949): 187–203, and Carlo de Clercq, *Les textes juridiques dans les Pandectes de Nicon de la Montagne Noire* (Venice: Tip. dei Padri Mechitaristi, 1942). The thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Slavonic translation has been edited in its entirety: Rumjana Pavlova and Šabka Bogdanova, *Pandekty Nikona Chernogortsa: Die Pandekten des Nikon vom Schwarzen Berge (Nikon Černogorec) in der ältesten slavischen Übersetzung* (Frankfurt: Paul Lang, 2000). Five chapters of the *Taktikon* have been edited in Greek: Vladimir Benešević, *Taktikon Nikona Chernogortsa: Grecheskij tekst po Rukopisi no. 441*

Sinajskogo Monastyria sv. Ekateriny (Petrograd: Tip. V. F. Kirshbauma, 1917). For more information on Nikon, consult Willem Aerts, "Nikon of the Black Mountain: Witness to the First Crusade?" in *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean, I: Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of the Crusader Principality*, 125–70; Milka Levy-Rubin, "'The Errors of the Franks' by Nikon of the Black Mountain: Between Religious and Ethno-Cultural Conflict," *Byzantion* 71 (2001): 422–37; Robert Allison, "Black Mountain: Regulations of Nikon of the Black Mountain" and "Typikon of Nikon of the Black Mountain for the Monastery and Hospice of the Mother of God Tou Roidiou," in *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, ed. John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000), 377–424, 425–39; Joseph Nasrallah, "Un auteur du XIe siècle, Nicon de la Montagne Noire (vers 1025–début du XIIe siècle)," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 19 (1969): 150–61; Irénée Doens, "Nicon de la Montagne Noire," *Byzantion* 24 (1954): 131–40. The Arabic version of the *Pandectes*, known as the *Kitab al-Hawi*, was translated into Ethiopic in 1582.

123. *CMR* 4: 666–71 (Abgar Bakhou [should be: Abjar Bahkou] and John C. Lamoreaux); René R. Khawam, trans., *Gérassime: Dialogues œcuméniques de guérison suivi de Traité sur la Sainte Trinité* (Paris: L'Esprit des péninsules, 1996); Abjar Bahkou, "*Kitab al-Kafi fi al-maʿna al-šafi / The Complete Book of the Proper Meaning*: The Christian Apology of Gerasimus," *Parole de l'Orient* 34 (2009): 309–43.

124. Carsten-Michael Walbiner and Mariam Nanobashvili, "Nicon's Treatise on the Conversion of the Georgians in Christian Arabic Literature and Its Possible Georgian Source," *Le Muséon* 121.3–4 (2008): 437–61, esp. 439, 457.

125. One possible exception is the very brief treatise ascribed to Paul of Antioch on the beliefs of the Franks. Paul Khoury, the editor of Paul of Antioch's works, rejects this work's authenticity but does not suggest who may have authored it. See Paul Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche: Traités théologiques* (Würzburg: Echter, 1994), 44.

126. This three-way correspondence is found in *PG*, vol. 120, col. 751–830.

127. On the local Palestinian background to the First Crusade, see Andrew Jotischky, "The Christians of Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulchre, and the Origins of the First Crusade," *Crusades* 7 (2008): 35–57, who argues forcefully against the previously dominant scholarly paradigm, which saw the Crusades as having little to do with the predicament of the Christian populations in Palestine. On the changing perceptions of Jerusalem in the West, leading to the First Crusade, see Colin Morris, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West: From the Beginning to 1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 134–79.

128. The terms refer to Greek-speaking and Arabic-speaking Orthodox Christians respectively. Johannes Pahlitzsch argues that the Arab Orthodox, especially in rural areas, had retained Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic as their liturgical language until the Crusader period; the Crusaders dubbed them *Suriani* precisely because this was their own self-designation in reference to their liturgical language. See his "Griechisch-Syrisch-Arabisch: Zum Verhältnis von Liturgie- und Umgangssprache bei den Melkiten Palästinas im Mittelalter," in *Language of Religion, Language of the People: Medieval Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. Ernst Bremer et al. (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2006), 37–48.

129. Andrew Jotischky, "Ethnographic Attitudes in the Crusader States: The Franks and the Indigenous Orthodox People," in *East and West in the Crusader States: Context, Contacts, Confrontations III*, ed. Krijnie Ciggaar and Herman Teule (Leuven: Peeters,

2003), 1–20; Johannes Pahlitzsch, *Graeci und Suriani im Palästina der Kreuzfahrerzeit: Beiträge und Quellen zur Geschichte des griechisch-orthodoxen Patriarchats von Jerusalem* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001); Joshua Prawer, "Social Classes in the Crusader States: The 'Minorities,'" in *A History of the Crusades,* vol. 5*: The Impact of the Crusades on the Near East*, ed. N. P. Zacour and H. W. Hazard (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 59–115; Richard Barry Rose, "Pluralism in a Medieval Colonial Society: The Frankish Impact on the Melkite Community during the First Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1099–1187" (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 1981).

130. Christopher MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), esp. 100–35; Jotischky, "Ethnographic Attitudes," 15–16.

131. Rifaat Ebied and David Thomas, *Muslim Christian Polemic during the Crusades: The Letter from the People of Cyprus and Ibn Abi Talib al-Dimashqi's Response* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

132. *CMR* 4: 325–30 (Johannes Pahlitzsch); Pahlitzsch, *Graeci und Suriani*, 270–89; edition and German translation of the homily for the third Sunday after Easter, ibid., 359–82.

133. Maja Kominko, "Constantine's Eastern Looks: The Elevation of the Cross in a Medieval Syriac Lectionary," *Series Byzantina* 8 (2010): 177–94.

134. Joseph Nasrallah, "Damas et la Damascène: Leurs églises à l'époque byzantine," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 35 (1985): 37–58, 264–76, esp. 50–53; Cyrille Jalabert, "Chrétiens de Damas aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles," in *Chrétiens du monde arabe: Un archipel en terre d'Islam*, ed. Bernard Heyberger (Paris: Éditions Autrement, 2003), 35–48, esp. 46–47. One vivid description of such destruction (still unpublished) is preserved in MS St. Petersburg, Oriental Institute, B1220. See Konstantin Panchenko, "Razrushenie damasskoj tserkvi Mart Marjam v 924g.: Svidetel'stvo ochevidtsa" [The Destruction of the Church of Mart Maryam in Damascus in 924: An Eyewitness Account], *Simvol* 61 (2012): 339–56. Though Panchenko argues that the manuscript describes the earliest destruction of the church in 924, it is more likely that it refers to one of the later destructions. See Alexander Treiger, "Unpublished Texts from the Arab Orthodox Tradition (1): *On the Origins of the Term 'Melkite'* and *On the Destruction of the Maryamiyya Cathedral in Damascus*," *Chronos*, forthcoming.

135. Klaus-Peter Todt, "Griechisch-Orthodoxe (Melkitische) Christen im zentralen und südlichen Syrien: Die Periode von der arabischen Eroberung bis zur Verlegung der Patriarchenresidenz nach Damaskus (635–1365)," *Le Muséon* 119.1–2 (2006): 33–88, esp. 85–87; D. Korobeinikov, "Orthodox Communities in Eastern Anatolia in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," *Al-Masaq* 15.2 (2003): 197–214; 17.1 (2005): 1–29.

136. Ray Jabre-Mouawad, "Un témoin melkite de la prise de Tripoli par les Mameluks (27 avril 1287)," in *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage in Honour of Father Prof. Dr. Samir Khalil Samir S. I. at the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Rifaat Ebied and Herman Teule (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 133–61, stanzas 10–12, 14, 40–41, 54, 57.

137. The most extensive and fundamental study of Arab Orthodoxy under the Ottomans is Konstantin A. Panchenko, *Blizhnevostochnoe Pravoslavie pod osmanskim vladychestvom* [Middle Eastern Christianity under Ottoman Rule] (Moscow: Indrik, 2012). It is to be hoped that this groundbreaking monograph will be translated into English and made accessible to a Western audience.

138. Constantin [Konstantin] Panchenko, "The Antiochian Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate and Rome in the Late 16th C.: A Polemic Response of the Metropolitan Anastasius Ibn Mujallā to the Pope," in *Actes du Symposium International "Le Livre. La Roumanie. L'Europe," Bibliothèque Métropolitaine de Bucarest, 4ème édition, 20–23 septembre 2011*, 3: 302–15 (Bucharest: Biblioteca Bucureştilor, 2012).

139. Robert M. Haddad, "Conversion of Eastern Orthodox Christians to the Unia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Conversion and Continuity*, 449–59; Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society: An Interpretation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970); Haddad, "Constantinople over Antioch, 1516–1724: Patriarchal Politics in the Ottoman Era," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 41.2 (1990): 217–38; Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Bernard Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique (Syrie, Liban, Palestine, XVIe–XVIIIe siècle)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1994); Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453–1923* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 190–213.

140. The first Arabic printing presses to be used among Muslims were not established until the early nineteenth century. In fact, the earliest printing press in the Arab world was a Syriac press imported from Rome to the Maronite monastery of Qozhaya in Lebanon, although it is only known to have been used to print a single edition of the Psalter. For the history of printing and the unresolved historical problem of why Muslims resisted this technology for so long, see Francis Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print," *Modern Asian Studies* 27.1 (1993): 229–51; Michael Albin, "Recent Studies in Middle Eastern Printing History: A Review Essay," *Libraries & Culture* 23.3 (1988): 365–73; Ioana Feodorov, "The Romanian Contribution to Arabic Printing," in *Impact de l'imprimerie et rayonnement intellectuel des Pays Roumains* (Bucharest: Biblioteca Bucureştilor, 2009), 41–61; Carsten-Michael Walbiner, "The Christians of Bilad al-Sham (Syria): Pioneers of Book-Printing in the Arab World," in *The Beginning of Printing in the Near and Middle East: Jews, Christians and Muslims*, ed. Klaus Kreiser et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 11–29.

141. Carsten-Michael Walbiner, "'Und um Jesu willen, schickt sie nicht ungebunden!' Die Bemühungen des Meletius Karma (1572–1635) um den Druck arabischer Bücher in Rom," in *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage*, 163–76; *HMLÉM*, IV/1: 70–86; cf. also Geoffrey Roper, "The Vienna Arabic Psalter of 1792 and the Rôle of Typography in European-Arab Relations in the 18th Century and Earlier," in *Kommunikation und Information im 18. Jahrhundert: Das Beispiel der Habsburgermonarchie*, ed. Johannes Frimmel and Michael Wögerbauer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 77–89.

142. Meletius petitioned the Propaganda Fide in Rome to print several of these texts, yet even though Rome initially agreed to print all of them with the only exception of Meletius's translation of the Bible (to which Rome preferred the Maronite version by Gabriel Sionita), it never acted on this promise.

143. Jean-Marie Sauget, *Premières recherches sur l'origine et les caractéristiques des synaxaires melchites (XIe–XVIIe s.)* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1969).

144. Macarius seems to have had a special affection for Georgia, which he visited twice on his second journey to Russia, on his way there and on his way back, staying there each time for over a year. In addition to various notes about the country, its people, and its church in his writings, he devoted two independent works to Georgia: *Akhbar Bilad al-Kurj*

(Reports of the Country of the Georgians) and *Akhbar Juzwiyya ʿan Abaʾina al-Qiddisin al-Ithnay ʿAshar* (Concise Reports on the Twelve [Syrian] Fathers), a history of the sixth-century Syrian missionaries who helped to spread Christianity in the Caucasus. (The latter work is incorporated into his longer compilation, *Book of the Bee*.) See Carsten-Michael Walbiner, "Accounts on Georgia in the works of Makariyus Ibn al-Zaʿim," *Parole d'Orient* 21 (1996): 245–55.

145. Carsten-Michael Walbiner, "Preserving the Past and Enlightening the Present: Macarius b. al-Zaʿim and Medieval Melkite Literature," *Parole d'Orient* 34 (2009): 433–41.

146. For an analysis of the following events, see Elias B. Skaff, *The Place of the Patriarchs of Antioch in Church History* (Newton, MA: Sophia Press, 1993), 303–31; Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 83–97.

147. M. I. Yakushev, "O vosstanovlenii arabskogo patriarshestva v Antiokhijskom patriarkhate" [On the Restoration of the Rule of Arab Patriarchs in the Patriarchate of Antioch], in *Lomonosovskie chtenija: Vostokovedenie* (Moscow: Akademija gumanitarnykh issledovanij, 2006), 374–79.

Chapter 1: *An Apology for the Christian Faith*

1. Margaret Dunlop Gibson, *An Arabic Version of the Acts of the Apostles and the Seven Catholic Epistles from an Eighth or Ninth Century MS. in the Convent of St. Catharine on Mount Sinai, with a Treatise On the Triune Nature of God, with translation, from the Same Codex* (Studia Sinaitica 7; London: Cambridge University Press, 1899; reprint, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2003). Unfortunately, Gibson did not transcribe thirteen of the eighty-two pages of text; perhaps some of them were missed or perhaps the photographs did not turn out well.

2. J. Rendel Harris, "A Tract on the Triune Nature of God," *American Journal of Theology* 5 (1901): 75–86; reprinted in his *Testimonies*, Part 1 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 39–51.

3. Samir Khalil Samir, "Une apologie arabe du christianisme d'époque umayyade?" *Parole de l'Orient* 16 (1990–91): 85–106; and also Samir, "The Earliest Arab Apology for Christianity (c. 750)," in *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period (750–1258)*, ed. Samir Khalil Samir and Jørgen S. Nielsen, 57–114 (Leiden: Brill, 1994). One of Samir's students produced an Italian translation of Gibson's edition: Maria Gallo, *Palestinese anonimo: Omelia arabo-cristiana dell'viii secolo* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1994).

4. I want to express my gratitude to Fr. Samir, who introduced me to the work in a seminar at the PISAI (Rome) in the fall of 1989; it was in the course of that seminar that I first made a draft of some of the passages presented below.

5. Harris, "Tract," 75 = Harris, *Testimonies* 1: 40.

6. Mark N. Swanson, "Some Considerations for the Dating of *Fī taṯlīṯ Allāh al-wāḥid* (Sinai Ar. 154) and *al-Ǧāmiʿ wuǧūh al-īmān* (London, British Library or. 4950)," *Parole de l'Orient* 18 (1993): 115–41.

7. Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 53–57, esp. 54.

8. Here is a list of these testimonies: A. On the Life of Christ: Ps. 110:3 / Ps. 2:7–9 / Ps. 110:1 / Isa. 59:20 / Isa. 11:10 / Isa. 63:9 / Isa. 7:14 / Isa. 9:6 / Isa. 2:3 / Ps. 47:8, 87:6,

22:27 / Mic. 5:2 / Ps. 72:6–12, 17, 5 / Isa. 19:1 / Job 9:8 / Ps. 33:6 / Job 33:4 / Dan. 9:24 / Isa. 35:3–6a / Gen. 49:9–10 / Bar. 3:35–37 / Hab. 3:3 / Dan. 2:34–35 / Zech. 9:9; B. On Baptism: Ps. 29:3 / Ps. 74:13b–14a / Ezek. 36:25 / Isa. 1:16 / Ps. 51:2 / Isa. 12:3–4 / Mic. 7:18–19 / Isa. 49:10b; C. On the Cross: Deut. 28:66 / Num. 21:6–9 / Zech. 12:10b.

9. Mark N. Swanson, "Beyond Prooftexting: Approaches to the Qurʾan in Some Early Arabic Christian Apologies," *The Muslim World* 88 (1998): 297–319, here 305–11.

10. Mark Swanson, "Beyond Prooftexting (2): The Use of the Bible in Some Early Arabic Christian Apologies," in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. David Thomas, 91–112 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007).

11. Mark N. Swanson, "Apologetics, Catechesis, and the Question of Audience in 'On the Triune Nature of God' (Sinai Arabic 154) and Three Treatises of Theodore Abu Qurrah," in *Christians and Muslims in Dialogue in the Islamic Orient of the Middle Ages*, ed. Martin Tamcke, 113–34 (Beiruter Texte und Studien 117; Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2007).

12. The translation below includes the following passages: Invocation and Opening Prayer: Sinai ar. 154, fol. 99r = Gibson, *Arabic Version*, 74 (Arabic text) / 2 (English translation); I.A. The Trinity: fol. 99r–102v = Gibson, *Arabic Version*, 74–78 (Arabic text) / 2–6 (English translation); I.B.1. Why the Incarnation?: fol. 102v–108r = Gibson, *Arabic Version*, 78–84 (Arabic text) / 6–12 (English translation) (fol. 106r and 107r are omitted from Gibson's edition and translation); I.B.2. A Passage on the True Religion: fol. 110r–v = Gibson, *Arabic Version*, 86–7 (Arabic text) / 14–15 (English translation) (fol. 110v is missing from Gibson's edition and translation); From II.A. On the Life of Christ: fol. 117v–118r, 119r, 122r, 124r–v = Gibson, *Arabic Version*, 94, 95–96, 98–99, 100–101 (Arabic text) / 23, 24, 27, 29–30 (English translation); From II.B. On Baptism: fol. 129r–130r = Gibson, *Arabic Version*, 104 (Arabic text) / 33–34 (English translation); From II.C. On the Cross: fol. 137r–v, 139r–v; not in Gibson. All titles and subtitles have been added by the translator.

13. Throughout this work, the Christian author freely uses the word *Allāh*, here translated "God" with an upper-case "G." To distinguish between *Allāh* ("God" used almost as a name for the object of worship) and *ilāh* ("a god," conceivably among gods), the latter is rendered by "god" with a lower-case "g." Here we have the common phrase *ilāh wāḥid*, "one god."

14. For a detailed phrase-by-phrase identification of Qurʾanic allusions in this prayer, see Swanson, "Beyond Prooftexting," 305–8.

15. Cf. Qurʾan 59:24.

16. Cf. Qurʾan 59:21.

17. Cf. Qurʾan 20:5.

18. Throughout this text the word *karāma* is best translated as "glory," and so here the adjective *karīm* is rendered "glorious" (and later the verb *akrama* as "glorify").

19. The author echoes the first phrase of the Islamic profession of faith (*shahāda*): "There is no god but God."

20. Qurʾan 2:285, 60:4.

21. Qurʾan 3:26, 66:8.

22. The author is probably making an allusion to Qurʾanic verses that speak of "the spirit" together with "the angels" (e.g. Qurʾan 78:38, 97:4). He may be thinking of a created "spirit" as in 1 Kings 22:21.

23. Arabic *risāla*, an unexpected word here.

24. Isa. 6:3.

25. This phrase, "that people might know," may also be translated "in order to teach people." It will occur again below.

26. Cf. Qurʾan 1:5.

27. The author uses Qurʾanic terms here: *al-Tawrāt wa-l-anbiyāʾ wa-l-Zabūr wa-l-Injīl*.

28. "Revealed" translates the Arabic word regularly used in the Qurʾan to refer to revelation, which literally means "sent down": God "sends down" scriptures.

29. Qurʾan 6:125, 39:22.

30. John 5:30.

31. Matt. 7:8; Luke 11:10.

32. Gen. 1:1.

33. Gen. 1:2.

34. Gen. 1:3.

35. Gen. 1:6–7.

36. Gen. 1:11, 1:24.

37. Gen. 1:20.

38. Gen. 1:26.

39. Isa. 1:20, 40:5, 58:14; Jer. 9:12; Mic. 4:4.

40. Isa. 40:12.

41. "Nature" here should not be overinterpreted: it renders simple Arabic words sometimes translated "matter" or "affair," not the later technical terms of Christological discourse.

42. Qurʾan 6:103.

43. The Arabic verb *walada*, translated here "begat," can be used for childbirth and physical parenthood as well as for other processes by which something generates something else.

44. Gen. 1:26.

45. Qurʾan 90:4.

46. Qurʾan 54:11.

47. Qurʾan 6:94.

48. Cf. Qurʾan 4:171?

49. Cf. Qurʾan 16:102.

50. Cf. Qurʾan 9:33, 48:28, 61:9.

51. Mark 1:9–11 and parallels.

52. In a later parallel passage (see p. 57) we find the expected "in whom I take delight" (*surirtu* rather than *shiʾtu*).

53. Ps. 29:3.

54. "Misguidance" translates *ḍalāla*, which in this text has a more active sense than is immediately sensed in the word "error," a common translation. God's guidance (*hudā*) undoes the Devil's misguidance (*ḍalāla*), as God's light (*nūr*) overcomes the Devil's darkness (*ẓulma*).

55. Cf. Qurʾan 32:9.

56. Cf. Qurʾan 2:35, 7:19.

57. Cf. Qurʾan 15:39.

58. Qurʾan 7:22.

59. Gen. 3:1–7, with vocabulary from the parallel Qurʾanic accounts.

60. Gen. 3:24; cf. Zech. 2:5.

61. This sentence is a good summary of the Qurʾanic portrayal of Noah; see, e.g., Qurʾan 11:25–49.

62. 1 Pet. 3:20.

63. "Apart from God" translates a common Qurʾanic phrase that emphasizes the folly and sinfulness of idolatry. It will recur several times below.

64. "The Devil" here translates *Iblīs*, which functions here, as in the Qurʾan, as a proper name. Both derive from Greek *diabolos*.

65. See Gen. 19. Again, the author summarizes the Biblical story using vocabulary that has overtones of the Qurʾanic Lot narratives, e.g., the words for "wicked," "abominable," "rain," and the comment in the next sentence that God "rescued" Lot. See, e.g., Qurʾan 7:80–84.

66. Cf. Qurʾan 2:194, 9:36, 123.

67. In the manuscript this sentence is misplaced and comes a paragraph earlier, between the two paragraphs in the section on Abraham and Lot.

68. Exod. 2:23–25.

69. Qurʾan 4:164.

70. Qurʾan 19:52.

71. Exod. 3:7.

72. Cf. Qurʾan 3:4, 5:95, 14:47, and 39:37.

73. The author here provides a very quick summary of the Biblical story of the Exodus (Exod. 2–16), again drawing for some of his vocabulary on the parallel Qurʾanic narratives.

74. See Exod. 32; cf. Qurʾan 7:148–53.

75. The manuscript has "like me."

76. Deut. 18:15,18–19.

77. Deut. 34:5–7.

78. The description of God as "the Most Merciful of those who show mercy" occurs four times in the Qurʾan: Qurʾan 7:151, 12:64, 12:92, and 21:83.

79. Ps. 144:5; cf. Ps. 18:9.

80. Ps. 80:1b–2.

81. Isa. 63:9.

82. Ps. 107:20.

83. Hab. 2:3.

84. Ps. 118:26a, 25a.

85. The untranslated word appears to be *tnʿm* in the manuscript (fol. 105v), which has no obvious meaning in this context.

86. Ps. 50:3.

87. An earlier draft of my translation, from this point in "*God's Response*" to the end of "*How God Decided to Undo the Devil*," served (with my blessing) as the basis of the translation that appeared in Samir, "Earliest Arab Apology," 85–86, 90–91, 94–95.

88. The description of God as "the Greater Knower," *aʿlam*, is frequent in the Qurʾan and also in Islamic tradition, in which the phrase *wa-llāhu aʿlam*, "And God is the Greater Knower," frequently concludes theological or legal arguments.

89. The long passage in {brackets} comes from fol. 106r of the manuscript, missing from Gibson's edition and translation, but see Samir, "Earliest Arab Apology," 84–88.

90. Cf. Qurʾan 3:42.

91. See Swanson, "Beyond Prooftexting," 297–302.

92. While the metaphor of God clothing Himself in our humanity is vivid, it perhaps reveals an inconsistency in the author's apologetic discourse. While "God clothed Himself in our humanity" is, from the perspective of Christian theology, an acceptable sentence, "The Father clothed Himself in our humanity" is not (since it was God *the Son* who was incarnate). For the author of the treatise, *Allāh* (= God) *normally* refers to God the Father.

93. Cf. Qurʾan 35:44.

94. Here "obedient friends" = *awliyāʾ ṭāʿatihi.*

95. The long passage in {brackets} comes from fol. 107r of the manuscript, missing from Gibson's edition and translation, but see Samir, "Earliest Arab Apology," 90–96.

96. Luke 1:26–33.

97. Qurʾan 19:20.

98. Luke 1:35.

99. The text uses the Qurʾanic term *ḥawāriyyūn* (Qurʾan 3:52, 5:111–12, 61:14).

100. Literally, "signs."

101. The word in the manuscript appears to be *yuwāʿiduhum*, "make an appointment with them," which does not make sense here.

102. Cf. Qurʾan 3:13, 24:44, etc.

103. The long passage in {brackets} comes from fol. 110v of the manuscript, missing from Gibson's edition and translation. The author continues with the speech of Gamaliel from Acts 5:34–39 to drive home the point that God establishes the true religion, while falsehood will not last.

104. Isa. 19:1.

105. The analogy would be tighter if it were the king who clothed *himself* in the *servant*'s garment. A slight emendation of the text (*labisa* rather than *albasahu*) would give us this result.

106. "Gainful way of life" is an attempt to translate *tijāra*, normally "commerce," an unexpected word here.

107. On the development of traditions about the Flight of the Holy Family to Egypt (and the role of Isa. 19:1 in this development), see Stephen J. Davis, "Ancient Sources for the Coptic Tradition," in *Be Thou There: The Holy Family's Journey in Egypt*, ed. Gawdat Gabra, 133–63 (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2001).

108. Arabic *quddūs al-muqaddas*; both terms are singular, in contrast to "holy of holies" = "most holy place/thing/one" that one finds in the Hebrew text and both ancient and modern versions. While there is a long tradition of understanding "the most holy one" as the Messiah, our author can interpret "the Holy One of the Holy One" as Christ who is "god from God," with whose coming prophecy had been sealed.

109. Perhaps an interpretation of Luke 16:16. The author is unattractively but typically anti-Jewish in his claim that Christianity as a religion has simply superseded Judaism, in which prophecy was abolished with the coming of Christ.

110. This statement may provide evidence that, for the author, the "establishment of Christianity" dates from some point during the ministry of Jesus rather than from His birth; see the discussion of the date of the work in the introduction to this chapter.

111. Luke 1:35. It is difficult to see how a Muslim reader would have found this to be an "unequivocally clear prophecy"! But the typological exegesis that we find here is not new; see Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* 3.20.4 (in ANF 1: 451), and Pseudo-Methodius, *De Simeone et Anna* (ANF 6: 393).

112. Qurʾan 19:20.

113. Luke 1:35.

114. The text uses the Qurʾanic forms of the names: Yahya ibn Zakariyya.

115. Matt. 11:11a.

116. Mark 1:9–11 and parallels.

117. Matt. 11:11b.

118. Qurʾan 3:38–9. This is the longest Qurʾan quotation in the work.

119. For comment on this passage, see Mark N. Swanson, "Folly to the *Ḥunafāʾ*: The Crucifixion in Early Christian-Muslim Controversy," in *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, ed. Emmanouela Grypeou et al., 237–56, esp. 243–47 (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

120. Exod. 34:29–30.

121. Again, the Qurʾanic vocabulary of revelation is used here: "the *Tawrāt* which God sent down to him."

122. See Jean Daniélou, "Das Leben, das am Holze hängt: Dt 28,66 in der altchristlichen Katechese," in *Kirche und Überlieferung: Festschrift für Joseph Rupert Geiselmann*, ed. Johannes Betz and Heinrich Fries, 22–34 (Freiburg: Herder, 1960).

123. Matt. 24:27; cf. 16:27.

124. Matt. 24:30.

125. On the ancient idea that Christ would be preceded by His cross at the *parousia*, see Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. John A. Baker (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964), 268–69.

Chapter 2: Theodore Abu Qurra

1. For an accessible introduction to the pagan religion of Harran, see Tamara M. Green, *The City of the Moon God: Religious Traditions of Harran* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 114; Leiden: Brill, 1992).

2. For an overview of the rise of Arab Christian literature, see Sidney H. Griffith, "The Monks of Palestine and the Growth of Christian Literature in Arabic," *Muslim World* 78 (1988): 1–28, reprinted in his *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth-Century Palestine* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992), and his "Byzantium and the Christians in the World of Islam: Constantinople and the Church in the Holy Land in the Ninth Century," *Medieval Encounters* 3 (1997): 231–65.

3. A fair amount of attention has been given by researchers to Theodore's life. One may note, in particular, Ignace Dick, "Un continuateur arabe de saint Jean Damascène: Théodore Abuqurra, évêque melkite de Harran," *Proche-Orient chrétien* 12 (1962): 209–23, 317–32, 13 (1963): 114–29; *GCAL*, 2: 7–26; Georg Graf, *Die arabischen Schriften des Theodor Abu Qurra Bischofs von Harran (ca. 740–820): Literarhistorische Untersuchungen und Übersetzung* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1910), 1–20; Sidney H. Griffith, *Theodore Abu Qurrah: The Intellectual Profile of an Arab Christian Writer of the First Abbasid Century* (Tel Aviv: Irene Halmos Chair of Arabic Literature, Tel Aviv University, 1992), 15–35; Griffith, "Reflections on the Biography of Theodore Abu Qurrah," *Parole de l'Orient* 18 (1993): 143–70; *HMLÉM*, II/2: 104–34; Joseph Nasrallah, "Regard critique sur I. Dick, Th. Abû Qurra: De l'existence du Créateur et de la vraie religion," *Proche-Orient chrétien* 36 (1986): 46–62, 37 (1987): 63–70; Samir Khalil Samir, "Al-jadīd fi sīrat Thāwudūrus Abī Qurra wa-āthārihi," *al-Mashriq* 73 (1999): 417–49; Samir,

"La littérature melkite sous les premiers abbassides," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 56 (1990): 469–86, esp. 476–81; Samir, "Thayūdūrus Abū Qurra," *Majallat al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmi al-ʿIraqi* 7 (1983): 138–60.

4. John C. Lamoreaux, "The Biography of Theodore Abu Qurrah Revisited," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002): 25–40.

5. John C. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abu Qurrah* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), xiii–xv.

6. Ibid., xvii–xviii.

7. The standard editions of Theodore's works are Qusṭanṭīn al-Bāshā, ed., *Mayāmir Thāwudūrus Abī Qurra Usquf Ḥarrān* (Beirut: Maṭbaʿat al-fawāʾid, 1904); Ignace Dick, ed. and trans., "Deux écrits inédits de Théodore Abuqurra," *Le Muséon* 72 (1959): 53–67; Ignace Dick, ed., *Théodore Abuqurra: Traité de l'existence du Créateur et de la vraie religion* (Patrimoine arabe chrétien 3; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1982); Ignace Dick, ed., *Théodore Abuqurra: Traité du culte des icônes* (Patrimoine arabe chrétien 10; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1986); Sidney H. Griffith, ed. and trans., "Some Unpublished Arabic Sayings Attributed to Theodore Abu Qurrah," *Le Muséon* 92 (1979): 27–35; John C. Lamoreaux, ed. and trans., "An Unedited Tract against the Armenians by Theodore Abu Qurrah," *Le Muséon* 105 (1992): 327–41; Paola Pizzi, trans., and Samir Khalil Samir, ed., *Teodoro Abu Qurra: La libertà* (Patrimonio culturale arabo cristiano 6; Torino: Silvio Zamorani, 2001).

8. The standard edition of the corpus remains: *PG* 97: 1461–610. A number of Theodore's treatises against Islam have been critically edited by Reinhold Glei and Adel Theodor Khoury, eds. and trans., *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abu Qurra: Schriften zum Islam* (Corpus islamo-christianum: Series graeca 3; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1995).

9. *Opuscula* 2, 4 (translated from Arabic), and 43.

10. John C. Lamoreaux, "Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 42 (2001): 361–86.

11. He mentioned this Syriac work in his *On the Death of Christ* (Basha, *Mayamir*, 60–61; English translation in Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, 119).

12. Leila Datiašvili, ed., *Teodore Abuk'ura: T'rakt'at'ebi da dialogebi targmnili berjnulidan Arsen Iq'altoelis mier* (Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1980).

13. For an overview, see Lamoreaux, "Theodore Abu Qurrah and John the Deacon," 361–86; and Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, xxviii–xxxv.

14. Sidney H. Griffith, "Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām: Theodore Abu Qurrah on Discerning the True Religion," in *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period (750–1258)*, ed. Samir Khalil Samir and Jørgen S. Nielsen, 1–43 (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

15. The work is divided into three distinct parts, each of which is a separate treatise, united around the basic theme of defending Christianity against the claims of the other religions of the early medieval Middle East, especially Judaism and Islam. Theodore may himself have collected these works into a miscellany, to form a kind of apologetic handbook, or it may be that they were joined together by a later scribe. In either case, only its second part is translated here. Translations of the other parts can be found in Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abu Qurrah*, part 1 (On Natural Theology) at 165–74, and part 3 (That Christianity Is from God) at 41–47.

16. See below, "Parable of the Hidden King."

17. On the notion of deification in Orthodox Christianity, see Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung, eds., *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007).

18. See below, "What about Judaism?"

19. Ibid.

20. Guy Monnot, "Abu Qurra et la pluralité des religions," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 208 (1991): 49–71.

21. All subtitles have been added by the translator.

22. On the figure of Hermes in Arabic literature, see Kevin van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes: From Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), esp. 85–86, where he discusses the present passage in Theodore Abu Qurra.

23. On this subject, see Antonio C. D. Panaino, "The Zoroastrian Incestuous Unions in Christian Sources and Canonical Laws: Their (Distorted) Aetiology and Some Other Problems," in *Controverses des chrétiens dans l'Iran sassanide*, ed. Christelle Jullien, 69–88 (Cahiers de Studia Iranica 36; Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 2008).

24. Cf. 2 Kings 17:24.

25. For this tradition, see Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 30b: "In the future, the land of Israel will bring forth ready baked rolls and fine woolen garments."

26. Matt. 5:42.

27. Much of Theodore's description of paradise is from the Qurʾan: for "a delight for those who drink," see Qurʾan 37:46, 47:15; for "ones that neither jinn nor men have touched," see Qurʾan 55:56, 74.

28. Cf. Mark 9:48.

29. Here and below, "as it is in reality" translates *bi-ʿaynihi*. *ʿAyn*, an actually existing entity, is here contrasted with *shibh*, "likeness."

30. Gen. 2:23.

31. Gen. 1:26.

32. Cf. Matt. 7:12.

33. Cf. Exod. 20:17.

34. See Andrew Louth, trans., *John of Damascus, Three Treatises on the Divine Images* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), §§ I.29 and III.33, 33 and 106.

35. Actually, Theodore has here concatenated John 20:21 and Matt. 28:19–20.

36. Matt. 7:12.

37. Matt. 19:21, 16:24.

38. Matt. 10:9–10.

39. Matt. 10:37.

40. John 13:34–35.

41. Cf. John 15:12–13.

42. Matt. 5:38–45.

43. John 14:23.

44. John 14:15–17.

45. John 16:27–28.

46. John 14:1–2.

47. John 14:3.
48. John 17:8–12, 20–24.
49. John 3:35–36.
50. John 3:2.
51. Matt. 22:29 and Luke 20:34–36.

Chapter 3*: The Disputation of the Monk Abraham of Tiberias*

1. For the Arabic text, see Giacinto Būlus Marcuzzo, *Le Dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade avec ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Hāšimī à Jérusalem vers 820* (Rome: G. B. Marcuzzo, 1986), 349 and 529. There is a similar shift in the exorcism scene from *ʿifrīt* (a powerful jinni in Arab demonology), when the emir speaks, to *shayṭān* (the word for demons that Arabic-speaking Christian writers also used), when the narrator speaks (Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 523). On the word *ṣibgha* in the Qurʾan (2:138) and its interpretations by later Muslim exegetes, see Hugh Goddard, "Baptism," in *EQur*, 1: 200–201; on Arab demonology, see J. Chelhod, "ʿIfrīt," in *EI2*, 3: 1050–51, and Jacqueline Chabbi, "Jinn," in *EQur*, 3: 43–50.

2. See Samir Khalil Samir, "The Prophet Muḥammad as Seen by Timothy I and Other Arab Christian Authors," in *Syrian Christians under Islam: The First Thousand Years*, ed. David Thomas, 75–106, esp. 77 (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

3. See Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 111–12 (on the confessional identity of the monk) and 200–209 (on the two recensions, with references to their theology).

4. The author says: "Less than two hundred years have elapsed since the beginning of your dominion and you have already murdered seven caliphs." The end of the passage might seem as helpful for dating the debate as its beginning but in fact gives no firm basis for it on its own: Muslims disagreed over the legitimacy of some rulers as well as over the manner of the death of some of them. From the context here, however, it is clear that the seventh murdered caliph should be identified as al-Amin, killed in 813. Marcuzzo concludes from this passage that the debate took place during the second decade of the ninth century (see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 328n74), while elsewhere he simply notes its date as "vers 820" (123 and 131).

5. His full name, ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Salih ibn ʿAli ibn ʿAbdallah ibn al-ʿAbbas ibn ʿAbd al-Muttalib, tells us that he was a lineal descendant of ʿAbd al-Muttalib, the Prophet's grandfather, and of al-ʿAbbas, the Prophet's uncle and progenitor of the ʿAbbasid dynasty ruling at the time. His father, ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Salih ibn ʿAli, was a cousin of the first two ʿAbbasid caliphs and a distinguished pillar of the dynasty most of his life. No source records ʿAbd al-Rahman as the governor of the district of Palestine, but his family had strong connections to Syria and owned estates in Palestine, especially at Ramla. For a summary of what is known about him and his family, see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 120–24, and Paul M. Cobb, *White Banners: Contention in ʿAbbasid Syria, 750–880* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 27–31 and 157n41.

6. See Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 107 (cf. also 181, 183, 186, 194, 222–23, 226, 228).

7. A German translation of the *beta* recension was published more than a century ago in Karl Vollers, "Das Religionsgespräch von Jerusalem (um 800 D)," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 29 (1908): 29–71, 197–221. This translation was in turn translated into English in N. A. Newman, *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Collection of Documents from the First Three Islamic Centuries (632—900 A.D.)* (Hatfield, PA: Inter-

disciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993), 269–353. The Arabic original of the *beta* recension remains unedited. Perhaps due to the wide circulation of the *Disputation* with Muslims, another text, a disputation with Jews, also came to be associated with Abraham of Tiberias. Its only study so far is Georges Vajda, "Un traité de polémique christiano-arabe contre les juifs attribué à 'Abraham de Tibériade,'" *Bulletin: Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes* 15 (1967–68): 137–50, based on the only manuscript that was known to the author. According to Marcuzzo, the text survives in three manuscripts (see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 194–95). I have seen two of these (Mingana Chr. Ar. Add. 205, a one-leaf fragment with a colophon, and Chester-Beatty 4924). They are clearly related to each other but belong to radically different recensions, if to the same text at all.

8. On the manuscript, see Vollers, "Das Religionsgespräch von Jerusalem," 29–30, and Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 172–75. This manuscript is now lost.

9. Professor James Montgomery's devoted critique of my first draft made me to substantially revise the translation. Later, Dr. Jonathan Goossen, Dr. Emma Jones, and the editors all helped improve it with a number of useful suggestions. I wish to express my gratitude to all of them.

10. My translation includes *verset*s 1–56, 63–222, and 512–84 of Marcuzzo's edition (*Dialogue*, 264–95, 299–369, 503–33). The edition is based on the earliest manuscript of the *alpha* recension (copied in the twelfth century), which Marcuzzo occasionally amended. My translation relies entirely on his edition: I took into account the variants cited in the apparatus, but did not consult the manuscripts themselves. In spite of relying on the same material, my understanding of the text sometimes differs from Marcuzzo's. I do not remark on these differences when I follow the Arabic text as edited by him and my translation diverges only from his French translation, but I do note it when I follow a different text, whether it is a matter of a different vowel sign or diacritic or a different variant cited in the apparatus. In some cases, a variant signaled in the apparatus makes more sense in the context or reads better than the editor's choice. In a few others, a light emendation creates a superior (and twice merely livelier) text than the one attested in the manuscripts that Marcuzzo used. Since the edition itself is eclectic (in fact, its principles are nowhere clearly explained), I feel justified in following a similar route.

11. By "the patriarch of the Christians," the author probably refers to the Chalcedonian patriarch of Jerusalem at the time, that is, to Thomas I (r. 807–21), Basil (r. 820–38), or John VI (r. 838–42). The "bishop of the Nestorians" is not known from other sources: the Church of the East started to appoint bishops for Jerusalem in the early ninth century, but their names are unrecorded. For Marcuzzo's discussion of these two figures, see *Dialogue*, 131–32; for the Chalcedonian patriarchs of Jerusalem between 815 and 840, see Michael Burgess, *The Eastern Orthodox Churches: Concise Histories with Chronological Checklists of Their Primates* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005), 185; on Nestorian bishops in Jerusalem, see Otto Meinardus, "The Nestorians in Egypt: A Note on the Nestorians in Jerusalem," *Oriens Christianus* 51 (1967): 112–29, here 124.

12. Add *kānā* or *kānū* ("were" in third person dual and plural) and *kāna* ("was" in third person singular) in the two clauses, following three manuscripts in both cases (I rendered them as "former"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 269.

13. The meaning of these sentences is not clear in Arabic.

14. For more on Qahtan, see A. Fischer, "Ḳaḥṭān," in *EI2*, 4: 447–49; and see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 109–10, on the significance of this passage.

15. Read *al-akrāḥ* or *al-ukayrāḥ* (sg. *kirḥ*, of both words) here; both mean "monks'

cells." Words graphically identical with them, different in one or two diacritics, are attested in other manuscripts. Reading "monks' cells" makes more sense in this context than the edition's *al-akwākh* (sg. *kūkh*), whether we understand it as "huts" or as the name of a minor locality in southern Syria. Marcuzzo took into account only his *manuscrit de base* in the discussion of the phrase (see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 275, for the edition's text and the variants, and 108–9 and 274n12 for his discussion of the phrase).

16. Read *ḍaʿīf al-ʿaql* ("dimwitted," literally "weak of mind") or *ḍaʿīf al-ʿilm* ("ignorant," literally "weak of knowledge") instead of the edition's *ḍaʿīf al-ʿamal* (best translated as "of little work"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 275. Each phrase is attested in one manuscript only, but the first two fit the context better. There is no possible indication elsewhere in the text that the monk would be old, as Marcuzzo suggests based on the third variant (Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 274n13), but he will attempt to excuse himself from the debate several times. If my suggestion is correct, this self-deprecating remark might be his first such attempt.

17. Read *ilā bayti l-maqdis* ("to the Holy City" with a common Arabic name for Jerusalem), following three manuscripts, instead of the edition's *ilā baytihi l-muqaddas* ("to His holy abode"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 275.

18. Read *qillat naẓra* (literally "lack of reflection, study," which I translated as "my ignorance"), following four manuscripts, instead of *qillat maʿrifatihi* ("lack of his knowledge"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 277. Only the former makes sense in the context, and *naẓra* was surely intended to rhyme with *maʿdhira* at the end of the sentence.

19. The phrase "may I be your ransom" (*juʿiltu fidāʾaka* or *juʿiltu laka l-fidāʾ*) appears four times in this translation (see also Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 279, 307, 309, 337).

20. "There are words for every occasion" and "there is a response to every speech" are two Arab proverbs. The first one occurs frequently in Arabic literature.

21. Muslims disagreed about the definition of the "Family of the Prophet": their views ranged from the most exclusive Shiʿite one, which restricted it to Muhammad's descendants through Fatima, his daughter, who married his cousin, ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, to broader ones that included in it all of Muhammad's blood-related descendants, or those of his entire clan, the Banu Hashim, or even of his entire tribe, the Quraysh. For more on the "Family of the Prophet" (*ahl al-bayt*, literally "People of the House"), see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 281, and Moshe Sharon, "The People of the House," in *EQur*, 4: 48–53.

22. I added *bihi* ("in it") to the beginning of this phrase, following another manuscript, but the Arabic phrase does not fit the syntax of the sentence with or without emendation; see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 287.

23. I changed the edition's *minhu* ("from it," i.e., from the earth) to *ʿalayhi* (literally "on it," here translated "in it," i.e., in the true religion), following three manuscripts; see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 287.

24. The quotation is from Qurʾan 3:67, but the Qurʾan here refers to Abraham, not to Jesus: "Abraham was not a Jew or a Christian, but a Muslim *ḥanīf.* He was not among the polytheists." For more on the term *ḥanīf,* see François de Blois, "Naṣrānī (Ναζωραῖος) and ḥanīf (ἐθνικός): Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and of Islam," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65 (2000): 16–25.

25. Read *makhlūq ibn makhlūqa* ("a created son of a created woman"), following three manuscripts, instead of the edition's *makhlūq min makhlūqa* ("a created man from a created woman"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 289. The expression *makhlūq ibn makhlūqa* occurs twice more in the *Disputation*; see ibid., 441 and 485.

26. Cf. Qurʾan 4:171, 2:87, 253, 5:110.

27. Cf. Qurʾan 19:21.

28. The *ghaḍā* tree is "the most important shrub in Saudi Arabian deserts for use as firewood," according to David Watts and Abdulatif H. Al-Nafie, *Vegetation and Biogeography of the Sand Seas of Saudi Arabia* (London: Kegan Paul, 2003), 47–49, esp. 48.

29. This is phrased oddly in Arabic (*alladhī qāla*), as if the religion and not God were speaking in the next sentence, which is a quotation from the Qurʾan; see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 291.

30. Qurʾan 3:85.

31. The expression "seal of the prophets" is from Qurʾan 33:40.

32. Read *amīr al-muʾminīn* ("Commander of the Faithful"), following two manuscripts, instead of the edition's *ummat al-muʾminīn* ("the community of the believers"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 291. First, the object suffixes of the following two words are masculine, while *ummat al-muʾminīn* would require feminine ones. Second, the corresponding phrase on p. 329, where the monk responds to this remark of the emir, has *amīr al-muʾminīn*.

33. The Qurʾan applies the expression *nūran wa-hudan* ("as light and guidance," Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 293) only to the Torah (Qurʾan 6:91), and similar ones, *fīhi hudan wa-nūr* and *fīhā hudan wa-nūr* ("in it guidance and light"), to the Torah and the Gospel (Qurʾan 5:44 and 46). In some verses the individual words "guidance" and "light" do refer to the Qurʾan, but as a pair they are used for it only later, in *hadith*s, as in this saying ascribed to Muhammad, "This is a Qurʾan that God sent down to me as light and guidance" (*hādhā qurʾānun anzalahu llāhu ʿalayya nūran wa-hudan*).

34. The expression (a variant of the Muslim profession of faith, the *shahāda*) occurs eight times in the Qurʾan: 2:255, 3:2, 4:87, 9:129, 20:8, 27:26, 28:70, and 64:13.

35. Modeled on a phrase that appears three times in the Qurʾan: 5:96, 6:72, and 58:9.

36. Allusion to various verses from the Qurʾan: 2:7, 6:46, and 45:23.

37. The reference to God sealing the Jews' eyes and hearts is Biblical (see Isa. 6:9–10, 44:18; John 12:39–41; Rom. 11:7–8); the rest, about the Bedouin, alludes to the Qurʾan (see 9:97 and 49:14).

38. Read *faḍḍala* ("to specially distinguish") instead of the edition's *faḍala* ("to exceed, overcome"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 305.

39. Read *ʿanhu* ("about it"), following two manuscripts, instead of the edition's *minhu* ("from it"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 311.

40. Read *lā baʾsa ʿalayka*, which I translate here as "you will see no harm" instead of the edition's *laysa ʿindakum baʾs wa-lā makrūh* ("you have nothing harmful or odious with you"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 315. The latter expression is in the plural and would not be a reaffirmation of the monk's safety as the context requires.

41. Add *bihim* ("with them"), following one manuscript; see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 315.

42. This is a genuine quotation. This passage appears almost verbatim in a book ascribed to a tenth-century Muslim writer, Abū l-Ḥusayn Ibn Samʿūn (d. 997). The Christian and the Muslim author no doubt drew ultimately on the same source. At the beginning of the last sentence, read *wa-lā taʾman*, following two manuscripts and Ibn Samʿūn's version, instead of the edition's *taʾman*, and later read *fa-laysa*, following one manuscript, instead of the edition's *fa-innahum laysa* (see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 315).

43. Read *lammā qulta* ("when you said") instead of the edition's *li-mā qulta* ("because of what you said"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 317.

44. Add *laysa lahā* (translated "without") to the edition's text here, following one manuscript (Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 317).

45. Unlike the oath of repudiation, the breaking of many other oaths, among them those sworn with God's name, could be expiated—probably the monk refers to this contrast when he says here, "The Muslims trivialize the lofty and grand and aggrandize the trivial and inconsequential." For more on oaths in Islam, see J. Pedersen, "Ḳasam," in *EI2*, 4: 687–90.

46. Matt. 10:5.

47. Cf. John 12:44.

48. John 10:38, 14:10–11.

49. Cf. John 15:4–5.

50. John 10:30.

51. John 14:9.

52. Read *wa-ūminu bihi* ("so I believe in Him"), following three manuscripts, instead of the edition's *wa-āmana bī* ("and he believed in Me"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 321.

53. Cf. Matt. 5:45.

54. The most portentous events that qualify as attacks on the Family of the Prophet were the assassination of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, in 661 and the Karbalaʾ massacre in 680, in which Husayn, ʿAli's son and Muhammad's grandson, was killed. In the ʿAbbasid context of the ninth century, however, the author could also have had in mind the recent killing of the caliph al-Amin in 813, since he was regarded as part of the Family too. For more on these events, see Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (Harlow, UK: Longman, 2004), 75–81, 89–90, 147–50.

55. Read *yastaḥillūna* ("they regard [it] lawful, fair game") instead of the edition's *yastaḥlawna* (*yastaḥlūna* with correct vocalization; "they find [it] pleasing"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 325.

56. This is Qurʾan 34:24 with a twist. Instead of "you and I," in the Qurʾan the verse says, "you or I." It was addressed to pagan Arabs, not to Muslims, as it would appear from its citation in the *Disputation*, so in the original context it does not imply the uncertainty of Muhammad in his mission.

57. Qurʾan 46:9.

58. Cf. Qurʾan 6:51, 70, 32:4.

59. Qurʾan 3:200.

60. Qurʾan 49:13.

61. The word I translated as "non-Arabs" (*al-aʿājim*) is often used to refer to the Persians whose power before Islam was sometimes cited by Christians to counter the Muslim argument that God would bestow power only on those who follow the true religion. It is possible that the author of the *Disputation* too meant the Sassanid Empire, as Marcuzzo takes it (see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 328), but for understanding the passage in this way we should amend the sentence to past tense and no manuscript cited in the edition supports this (Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 329).

62. Read *wuld* ("children, sons") instead of the edition's *walad* ("child, son"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 329.

63. The first four listed here were the first four caliphs (called traditionally "the rightly-guided ones"): Abu Bakr (r. 632–34), ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab (r. 634–44), ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan (r. 644–56), and ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (r. 656–61). ʿAbdallah ibn al-ʿAbbas (d. ca. 687–90) is regarded as the father of Qurʾanic exegesis and was one of the ancestors of the ʿAbbasids, thus also of the emir ʿAbd al-Rahman. Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan (r. 661–80) was the founder of the Umayyad dynasty and al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf the dynasty's most famous governor (d. 714). Only the first three are habitually associated with the collection of the Qurʾan in Muslim sources—which does not mean that the rest were not involved in it or that Muslim stories that possibly circulated in the early ninth century, but are unknown to us today, did not claim that they were. On the collection of the Qurʾan in Muslim sources and the inconsistencies of their narratives, see Michael Cook, *The Koran: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 119–26, and Chase F. Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 100–104.

64. On this Shiʿite sect, see I. Goldziher, "Ghurābiyya," in *EI2*, 2: 1098–99.

65. I emended the edition's "if you belong to those who claim that prophethood belonged to ʿAli" (*in kuntum mimman yaqūlu inna l-nubuwwata kānat li-ʿalī*; Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 331–33) to the only variant cited in the apparatus, "if you tell the truth" (*in kuntum ṣādiqūn*). Marcuzzo does not indicate how many manuscripts give this variant, but it makes better sense than his choice. The phrase "if you tell the truth" occurs in the Qurʾan twenty-two times (in the grammatically correct form, *in kuntum ṣādiqīn*), for example, in 2:23, 31, 94, 111, 3:93, 168, 183.

66. They are the Kharijites, who denied the legitimacy of both ʿUthman's and ʿAli's rule. On the background of the disputes on the imamate, see Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 17–32; on the Kharijites, ibid., 54–64.

67. This refers to those who subscribed to the four-caliph thesis, which accepted the legitimacy of these four rulers. The thesis developed and spread in the early ʿAbbasid period until it eventually became the dominant position among Sunni Muslims (see Crone, *God's Rule*, 28–31 and 94).

68. I have not found this phrase or sentiment attested elsewhere, but it surely refers to a sect opposing ʿAbbasid rule, perhaps to a group of Umayyad loyalists, who continued to be present in large numbers in Syria for centuries after the fall of the Umayyads. For more on them, see Cobb, *White Banners*, 43–65, and Patricia Crone, "ʿUthmāniyya," in *EI2*, 10: 952–54.

69. Detractors of the Umayyads abounded in the ninth century. The accusations against them included their usurpation of the caliphate from the Family of the Prophet as well as turning it into hereditary kingship. According to the detractors, Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan (r. 661–80), the founder of the dynasty, was seen as especially guilty of these and other crimes. On the perception of the Umayyads in the Muslim tradition, see Gerald R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate, AD 661–750* (London: Routledge, 2000), 11–18; on the image of Muʿawiya himself, see R. Stephen Humphreys, *Muʿawiya Ibn Abi Sufyan: From Arabia to Empire* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 3–10.

70. Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf was the governor of the East from 694 to his death in 714. He is perhaps most notorious for resorting to the bombardment of the Kaʿba in 692 during the Second Civil War. There are no recent studies on him; for an older account of his life, see A. Dietrich, "Al-Ḥadjdjādj b. Yūsuf b. al-Ḥakam b. ʿAḳīl al-Thaḳafī, Abū Muḥammad," in *EI2*, 3: 39–43.

71. I added *yā bna l-khanā* ("son of obscenity") following two manuscripts; see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 335.

72. Read *istafadtu* ("I profited," i.e., for the afterlife), following one manuscript, instead of the edition's *ishtafaytu* ("I was restored to health"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 335.

73. The word *fazaʿan* ("out of fear") is perhaps best omitted after this verb, as it is in two manuscripts; see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 337.

74. The text names the brother of ʿAbla (ʿAntar's beloved) ʿUkaz, which is an otherwise unattested name and probably the result of a series of copyists' mistakes who were unfamiliar with the ʿAntar legend. Therefore, I amended it to ʿAmr, which is the brother's name in the legend. For a detailed summary of the ʿAntar legend, see Peter Heath, *The Thirsty Sword: Sīrat ʿAntar and the Arabic Popular Epic* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1996).

75. Here I follow a variant attested in a single manuscript (*li-annakumā khaṣmāni wa-antumā tashhadāni lī bi-l-ḥaqq*) instead of the edition's *li-annakumā lī khaṣmāni bi-l-ḥaqq* ("because you are to me two rivals in the truth"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 343.

76. The Hebrew words are transliterated into Arabic letters in the text. This phrase often occurs in Arabic texts in transliteration.

77. The edition's *atānā yūḥannā bnu zakariyyā khātimu l-anbiyāʾi wa-l-ḥawāriyyīn* ("John, son of Zechariah, the seal of the prophets and apostles, came to us," see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 349) should be emended to the unattested *atānā yūḥannā bnu zakariyyā khātimu l-anbiyāʾi wa-l-ḥawāriyyūn* ("John, son of Zechariah, the seal of the prophets, and the apostles came to us"). No Christian writer would have described John the Baptist as the seal not only of the prophets but also of the apostles, and the emended version differs from the edition's by only a single letter in Arabic.

78. Read the plural *fa-daʿawnā* ("and they called us") with one manuscript instead of the edition's singular *wa-daʿā* ("and he called"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 349. This singular continues the probable error of the previous sentence, i.e., it refers only to John the Baptist and overlooks the apostles, but the next verb in the text switches to plural without signaling a change in the subject.

79. In this sentence several phrases echo the Nicene Creed.

80. This phrase alludes to a common Muslim locution, "In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate," known as the *basmala*. It appears before most chapters of the Qurʾan.

81. John 1:1.

82. Gen. 1:2.

83. Ps. 33:6.

84. This is not a quotation from the Psalms or anywhere else from the Bible, although similar motifs do appear in it. The closest is perhaps Ps. 136:5–9.

85. Read *hadhat* ("spoke irrationally, raved") instead of the edition's *hadhdhat* ("read, recited quickly"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 357.

86. Read *wa-qālū* ("and they, i.e., the kings and the rulers, said") instead of the edition's *wa-qāla* ("and he, i.e., David, said"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 357. Although unattested in the manuscripts Marcuzzo cites, this small emendation makes the quotation from Ps. 2:1–4 continuous.

87. Ps. 2:1–4.

88. Cf. Ps. 107:20.

89. Cf. Ps. 56:4.

90. Ps. 119:89.

91. Cf. Exod. 3:10–14.

92. Cf. Exod. 30:2–3.

93. Ps. 67:7.

94. Gen. 1:26.

95. See Andreas Su-Min Ri, *Commentaire de la* Caverne des trésors*: Étude sur l'histoire du texte et de ses sources* (Louvain: Peeters, 2000), 63–86. "Said" in the past tense indicates citations from the sacred texts and "says" in the present tense explains what God conveys through them.

96. Gen. 3:22.

97. Gen. 11:7.

98. Cf. Prov. 30:4.

99. Cf. Job 33:4.

100. Cf. Jer. 1:17–19, 25:2–4.

101. Cf. Isa. 40:8.

102. Cf. Job 9:8.

103. Cf. Matt. 14:25, Mark 5:48, John 5:19.

104. Read *dhakara* ("he mentioned") instead of the edition's *dhukira* ("it was mentioned"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 365.

105. Read *minhā* (fem. or pl.), with one manuscript, instead of the edition's *minhu* (masc.); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 369.

106. A *hadith* well-known in the Muslim tradition agrees with most of the monk's citation but ends with declaring a man of Quraysh worth only two others instead of ten.

107. Here I exceptionally emended *ʿiyānan* ("as eyewitness") to *ʿuryānan* ("naked"), although no manuscript supports it; see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 507. The latter word differs only in one letter and fits the context better.

108. Add *ʿajāʾib* ("miracles") here and change *mādhā* ("what?") to *wa-ayya ʿajība* ("what miracle?") in the next sentence, following one manuscript; see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 507.

109. I inserted "true" into both phrases—they do not make sense in English otherwise.

110. Read *dhakartu* ("I mentioned") instead of the edition's *dhakarta* ("you mentioned"), which must be an error; see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 513.

111. I omitted *li-l-amīr* ("to the emir"), following two manuscripts, because it does not fit the sentence: it is the emir who speaks here; see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 517.

112. Read *min hādhihi* (sic) *l-rāhib* ("from this monk"), following one manuscript, instead of the edition's *mimman naḥnu fīhi* ("from whom we are in"), which is probably a copyist's error from *mimmā naḥnu fīhi* ("from what we are in"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 519.

113. Read *yaʾtiyahu bi-sammi sāʿatin* ("to bring him instantly killing poison") instead of the edition's *yaʾtiyahu bi-sammin sāʿatan* ("to bring him poison immediately"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 519.

114. Read *fa-qāla l-amīr li-mutaṭabbibihi* ("the emir said to his physician"), following one manuscript, instead of the edition's *fa-qālū lahu* ("they said to him"); see Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 521. This makes the continuation clearer.

115. Cf. Matt. 16:16.

116. Cf. Luke 15:7.

117. On the status of non-Muslim converts to Christianity in Islam, see Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 146–48.

118. The three other variants cited in the edition's apparatus refer to an attempt to make the ex-Muslims recant (in Marcuzzo, *Dialogue*, 531).

Chapter 4: Hagiography

1. On this work and its Greek and Arabic recensions, see Sidney H. Griffith, "The *Life of Theodore of Edessa*: History, Hagiography, and Religious Apologetics in Mar Saba Monastery in Early ʿAbbasid Times," in *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present*, ed. Joseph Patrich, 147–69 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001); *CMR* 2: 585–93 (Klaus-Peter Todt and Mark N. Swanson).

2. See the exhaustive study and edition by Robert Volk, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vols. 6/1 and 6/2: *Historia animae utilis de Barlaam et Ioasaph (spuria)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006–2009). For an English translation of *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, see St. John Damascene, *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, with an English translation by G. R. Woodward and H. Mattingly (London: Heinemann: Macmillan Co., 1914 and reprints).

3. Much of this material is presented in the pioneering work, in Arabic, of Archimandrite Tuma Bitar, *al-Qiddisun al-mansiyyun fi al-turath al-Antaki* [*Forgotten Saints in the Antiochian Tradition*] (Dūmā, Lebanon: Dayr Mār Yūḥannā, 1995); see also Mark N. Swanson, "Arabic Hagiography," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, ed. S. Efthymiadis, vol. 1: Periods and Places, 345–67 (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011). Some of the Christian saints' lives, preserved in Arabic, have been recently made available in English translations: Monica J. Blanchard, "The Georgian Version of the Martyrdom of Saint Michael, Monk of Mar Sabas Monastery," *Aram* 6 (1994): 140–63 (this martyrdom was probably originally written in Arabic but is preserved only in Georgian as well as in a later Greek adaptation incorporated in the *Life of Theodore of Edessa*, mentioned in n1 above); Rocio Daga Portillo, "The Arabic Life of St. John of Damascus," *Parole de l'Orient* 21 (1996): 157–88; John C. Lamoreaux, ed. and trans., *Life of Stephen of Mar Sabas*, 2 vols. (CSCO 578–79; Louvain: Peeters, 1999) (this work was originally written in Greek but is fully preserved only in Arabic; cf. *CMR* 1: 406–10); John C. Lamoreaux and Cyril Cairala, eds. and trans., *The Life of Timothy of Kakhushta* (Patrologia Orientalis 48.4; Turnhout: Brepols, 2000) (cf. *CMR* 1: 919–22). Some later, seventeenth-century hagiographical material by the Patriarch of Antioch Macarius Ibn al-Zaʿim (see chapter 11) is available in Michel Abras, "Vies des saints d'Antioche de Makariyus Ibn al-Zaʿim, patriarche d'Antioche (1647–1672)," *Parole de l'Orient* 21 (1996): 285–306; Ioana Feodorov, "The Unpublished Arabic Version of the Life of Saint Paraskevi the New by Makarios az-Zaʿim al-Halabi: Foreword, Arabic edition and English translation," *Arabist: Budapest Studies in Arabic* 24–25 (2003): 69–80.

4. The loss of a folio in Sinai ar. 445 has introduced a gap in the middle of the Passion. The missing matter has here been supplied from Sinai ar. 448, as presented in Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala's introduction to his "*Šahādat al-qiddīs Mār Anṭūniyūs*: Replanteamiento de la 'antigüedad' de las versiones sinaíticas a la luz del análisis textual," *MEAH, Sección Árabe-Islam* 57 (2008): 237–67, here 248–49. As the two manuscripts differ little, there is no disruption to the narrative. It may also be noted that Monferrer-Sala's edition presents the text of B exactly as it is found in the manuscript. He is concerned with the details of how the different manuscripts are related to one another. He thus presents the

manuscripts as they are, such that some letters are missing points (*nuqaṭ*) and others have been corrupted through scribal error. In the present translation such matters have usually been tacitly corrected. Only if an intelligible text required a change to the consonantal form (*rasm*) of a word has the correction been noted.

5. The date is established as follows: He was 20 when he left for Jerusalem, spent 13 years on razzias, shortly after which he met the patriarch John of Jerusalem (fl. 839–43). He will thus have been 33 years old in 840 CE. He then spent 5 years at Mar Saba, 5 years at Sinai as a monk, followed by 7 years as abbot, shortly after which he was martyred (around 50 years of age, ca. 857).

6. Swanson later published a fresh English translation, for a general audience: Mark N. Swanson, "Obscure Text, Illuminating Conversation: Reading the Martyrdom of ʿAbd al-Masih," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 35 (2008): 374–81.

7. The question is difficult as those earlier sources were also used by the two passions. Here is not the place to examine such matters in detail. On the topic, see, e.g., André Binggeli, "Anastase le Sinaïte: Récits sur le Sinaï et Récits utiles à l'âme" (PhD diss., Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2001), 462–63, 531–32; E. Kałużniacki, "Die Legende von der Vision Amphilog's und der *Logos Historikos* des Gregorios Dekapolites," *Archiv für slavische Philologie* 25 (1903): 101–8; the introduction to Paul Peeters, "S. Antoine le néo-martyr," *Analecta Bollandiana* 31 (1912): 410–50; and Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1997), 385.

8. Erik Thunø, *Image and Relic: Mediating the Sacred in Early Medieval Rome* (Rome: Erma di Bretschneider, 2002), 137–38.

9. G1 has Gregory transmit the tale directly from Nicholas who is called Julianus—with no mention of John of Monembasia. The attribution to Gregory of Dekapolis should perhaps be accepted only with caution. It has slight foundation in the manuscripts and is based solely on the work's title, as found in a single manuscript (Paris gr. 1190, 1568 CE). It reads, in part: "Historical Discourse of Gregory Dekapolites . . . on seeing which, a certain Saracen came to believe, [and] suffered martyrdom for the sake of our Lord, Jesus Christ." The only other manuscript of G1 (Vatican gr. 1130, 16th/17th c.), offers instead "Historical discourse of Gregory. . .." The text here has been corrected by a reader, though, and earlier read, "Historical discourse of Gregory of Nyssa." One wonders whether the attribution to Gregory of Dekapolis is not a result of scribal error or scribal speculation, such that a miracle of "George in Diospolis" (the Greek name for Lydda) has been turned into a miracle written by a nonexistent author named "Gregory of Diospolis" or "George of Dekapolis." Later scribes then tried to fix the name of this unknown author as best they could: Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Dekapolis, or just Gregory.

10. Printed by Johannes B. Aufhauser, *Miracula S. Georgii* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), 64–89, at the bottom of 66–88.

11. One wonders if a solution is not somehow connected to the textual tradition of the *Beneficial Tales* of Paul of Monembasia (fl. ca. 950). Though composed in Greek, its stories often treat of Muslims. An early and shorter version of it (attributed to one Peter of Monembasia) had already been translated into Arabic by the late tenth century (Joseph-Marie Sauget, "Le Paterikon du manuscrit arabe 276 de la Bibliothèque nationale de Paris," *Le Muséon* 82 [1969]: 363–404). Further, the earliest-known copy of the Arabic version has material unknown in Greek, including, coincidentally, an account of a Muslim who assaults an icon of Saint Cyrus with a lance (an edition and Latin translation can be

found in Paul Peeters, "Miraculum sanctorum Cyri et Iohannis in urbe Monembasia," *Analecta Bollandiana* 25 [1906]: 233–40). Monembasia was relatively insignificant in the early Byzantine period. Why these repeated links between it and the churches of Syro-Palestine? And why do they occur in connection with pious tales and not other genres—and with materials dealing with Islam?

12. Reading *taṭallaʿa*.

13. Reading *fa-ʾaqarat*.

14. Reading *wa-nafadhat*.

15. Reading *ittafaqa*.

16. Reading *bi-* for *fī*.

17. Reading *al-ṣawānī*, the plural of *al-ṣīniyya*.

18. On the history of the Great Entrance, see Robert F. Taft, *The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Preanaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1975).

19. Tentatively reading *sharab*.

20. Reading *tarafrafa*.

21. Reading *bi-l-ajiyā*.

22. Reading *qabla* for *fa-lammā*.

23. A line seems to have fallen from the text. I have supplied the bracketed materials from Dick's edition of the longer recension.

24. Dan. 2:28.

25. The edition reads: *marʿūb min gh.w.b*. This seems to be a corruption of an earlier dittography, *marʿūb marʿūb*.

26. Lit. "those who pray."

27. Something seems to have fallen from the text. The bracketed words are supplied from recension A. They might have fallen from the text as a result of homeoteleuton.

28. Guy Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1890), 488.

29. See Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634–1099* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 457–58. The manuscript here adds "who was at that time the patriarch of Jerusalem." The phrase is redundant and appears to be a gloss.

30. Cf. Eph. 5:32.

31. Reading *yaẓharuhā*.

32. Reading *yuwaffiq*.

33. The verb (perhaps *samiʿa*) has fallen from the text.

34. Reading *wa-ayqaẓat-hu*.

35. Reading *ziyy*.

36. Restoring what the editor regards as a dittography.

37. The term is likely being used generically for those originally from East Africa, which throughout the ʿAbbasid period supplied countless slaves.

38. Tentatively reading *dūna* for *h.w.n*. If the emendation is correct, the passage seems to mean that this prison was for those who had committed serious but not capital crimes.

39. Reading *ashraqa*.

40. Deleting the *wāw* before *amara*.

41. Water could be added to the lamp to raise the level of the oil. Still, the phrasing is odd.

42. In Syria the route traveled north from Damascus to Aleppo and then passed in a northeasterly direction until Manbij, whence it turned southeast and followed the bank of the Euphrates until it reached Raqqa. See map 2b, in Adam J. Silverstein, *Postal Systems in the Pre-Modern Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

43. Reading *bi-iṭlāqihi*.

44. Adding *bayna* before *yadayhi*.

45. Reading *azīdu*.

46. Reading *ballaghanī*.

47. In Muslim texts, the term *ḥanīf* designates a follower of the Qurʾanic religion of Abraham, which is understood to be a monotheism that is neither Jewish nor Christian. Here, the term is synonymous with Islam. In Christian texts the meaning of the term often follows the older Aramaic/Syriac sense, "gentile" or a "pagan."

48. Adding *samiʿa* after *lammā* and deleting *kāl.m*, which may have arisen through dittography.

49. Reading *thurayya*.

50. Emending both verbs to Form V.

51. On this Monastery of the Olives, which appears to be otherwise unknown, see Ignace Dick, "La passion arabe de S. Antoine Ruwah, néo-martyr de Damas († 25 déc, 799)," *Le Muséon* 74 (1961): 109–33, here 115–16, and Samir Khalil Samir, "Saint Rawh al-Qurashi: Étude d'onomastique arabe et authenticité de sa passion," *Le Muséon* 105 (1992): 343–59, here 357–58.

52. Lit. "who were intent on the *ghazw* or raid."

53. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:33.

54. Matt. 10:37; Luke 14:26.

55. Cf. Luke 18:27.

56. Luke 15:3.

57. Luke 15:11–32, 23:39–43.

58. *CMR* 1: 821–4 (Antonio Rigo).

59. Lit. "The Fortress of the Mountain," meaning, the village that had grown up around the Sinai monastery.

60. Ramla was founded by Sulayman ibn ʿAbd al-Malik in 715. It was situated next to Lydda (Diospolis), which it was intended to replace as provincial capital.

61. There were at least two Orthodox churches in Ramla. The first was known as the Lower Church, and was dedicated to Saint Cyriacus. It was distinguished from another known as the Upper Church. It is not clear whether it was part of the same building or a separate church. If the latter, it may be that dedicated to Saint Cosmas. For this once-splendid church, see Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993–2009), 2: 195–97.

62. The casual mention of Edessa (*al-Ruhā*) is odd. That distant city plays no role in the present text, nor is it otherwise connected to the saint's cult. Two later mss (J and L, in the apparatus) offer instead: "He then prayed and they returned to the Mountain." This is easier to understand but is unlikely to have given rise to the present text. It is tempting to emend the text, perhaps to *Arīḥā* (Jericho).

63. See Mahmoud Ayoub, "Religious Freedom and the Law of Apostasy in Islam," *Islamochristiana* 20 (1994): 75–91, at 81, 87–88.

64. Wear to the manuscript renders the reading of a word less than clear. The editor suggests *sabrihi* ("the sounding of it," i.e., the well). If the second letter is a *lām*, as it

would appear to be, *salbihi* ("to snatch or steal it") seems to offer better sense.

65. Reading *yuqāwimuhum*.

66. For this once splendid church, see Pringle, *Churches*, 2: 9–27. It did not survive the rampages of the mad Fatimid caliph al-Hakim, and was destroyed in the early years of the eleventh century and on several later occasions. The current church dates from the late nineteenth century.

67. Lit. "the prophet Muhammad al-Amin," an epithet given Muhammad by his first wife, Khadija, on account of his being honest (*amin*).

Chapter 5: Agapius of Manbij

1. The standard editions and translations are Michael Breydy, ed. and trans., *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios von Alexandrien*, 2 vols. (CSCO 471–72; Louvain: Peeters, 1985), and Louis Cheikho, Bernard Carra de Vaux, and Habib Zayat, eds., *Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*, 2 vols. (CSCO 50–51; Beryti: E Typographeo Catholico), 1906–1909. For the manuscript tradition, see Michael Breydy, *Études sur Said ibn Batriq et ses sources* (CSCO 450; Louvain: Peeters, 1983). Accessible studies include Sidney H. Griffith, "Apologetics and Historiography in the *Annals* of Eutychios of Alexandria: Christian Self-Definition in the World of Islam," in *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage in Honour of Father Prof. Samir Khalil Samir*, ed. Rifaat Ebied and Herman Teule, 65–91 (Louvain: Peeters, 2004); Sidney H. Griffith, "Eutychius of Alexandria on the Emperor Theophilus and Iconoclasm in Byzantium: A 10th-Century Moment in Christian Apologetics in Arabic," *Byzantion* 52 (1982): 154–190; and Uriel Simonsohn, "The Biblical Narrative in the Annales of Saʿid Ibn Batriq and the Question of Medieval Byzantine-Orthodox Identity," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22 (2011): 37–55. See further, *CMR* 2: 224–33 (Uriel Simonsohn); *GCAL*, 1: 34–35; *HMLÉM*, II/2: 23–34.

2. For Yahya's Chronicle, see Ignace Kratchkovsky et al., eds., *Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Saʿid d'Antioche: Continuateur de Saʿid-ibn-Bitriq* (Patrologia Orientalis 18.5, 23.3, 47.4; Brepols: Turnhout, 1924–97) (Arabic and French), and John Harper Forsyth, trans., "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938–1034) of Yahya b. Saʿid al-Antaki," 2 vols. (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1977). For scholarship on Yahya, see Adel Sidarus and Samuel Moawad, "Un comput melkite attribuable à Yahya b. Saʿid al-Antaki (XIe s.)," *Le Muséon* 123 (2010): 455–77, and Souad Slim, "Yahya Ibn Saʿid al-Antaki entre tradition et renouveau," *Parole de l'Orient* 34 (2009): 237–50, as well as Mark N. Swanson's contributions in *CMR* 2: 658–61 and *CMR* 3: 257–60.

3. For the marches of Syria in the early Islamic period, see A. Asa Eger, "The Spaces between the Teeth: Environment, Settlement, and Interaction on the Islamic-Byzantine Frontier," 2 vols. (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2008), and Michael Bonner, "The Naming of the Frontier: *Awasim*, *Thughr*, and the Arab Geographers," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57 (1994): 17–24. For a pleasant overview of the religious life of Hierapolis and the surrounding region, see Elizabeth Key Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain: Saint Sergius between Rome and Iran* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).

4. The city itself was divided into two parts: the city proper, set back some twenty-five miles to the east of the river and the fortified Jisr Manbij guarding the crossing.

5. Michael Breydy, "Richtigstellungen über Agapius von Manbiğ und sein historisches Werk," *Oriens Christianus* 73 (1989): 90–96.

6. Sinai ar. 580 and Sinai ar. 456, on which see below.

7. Agapius's version of the legend of the Septuagint is parallel to other surviving versions but contains elements that seem to have no surviving precedent. It has been well analyzed and translated by Abraham Wasserstein and David J. Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 144–58. This version of the tale is widely circulated in later Arab Christian works. Given its dispersion, it is likely that Agapius was not himself responsible for having first written it.

8. For the date, see Breydy, "Richtigstellungen," 93–94.

9. For a list of more recent manuscripts, see *HMLÉM*, II/2: 51–52.

10. Another manuscript with this form of the text was once to be found in the private collection of Joseph Nasrallah (*HMLÉM*, II/2: 52).

11. In 2011 Robert G. Hoyland published a reconstruction of the lost chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa, a text that Agapius used heavily for events from the seventh and eighth centuries. Hoyland identifies the passages where Agapius is dependent on Theophilus and provides for each of them a full translation, with valuable annotations. Hoyland's work also includes a new edition of those passages in the second half of Agapius's Chronicle that Vasiliev and Cheikho had not been able to read due to water damage. See Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle and the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 319–23.

12. Part 1.1 in Patrologia Orientalis 5.4 (1909); part 1.2 in Patrologia Orientalis 11.1 (1913); part 2.1 in Patrologia Orientalis 7.1 (1911); and part 2.2 in Patrologia Orientalis 8.3 (1912).

13. In 2009 Roger Pearse prepared an English version of the chronicle, which is carefully translated from Vasiliev's French. It also includes Vasiliev's introduction and all of his annotations. He has graciously made the entirety available at his website, as part of his painstaking efforts to make the Arab Christian tradition better known (http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/index.htm#AgapiusUniversalHistory). It should also be mentioned that an Italian version of Agapius's Chronicle is currently in preparation by Bartolomeo Pirone.

14. Louis Cheikho, ed., *Agapius Episcopus Mabbugensis, Historia Universalis* (CSCO 65; Scriptores Arabici 3.5; Beryti: E Typographeo Catholico, 1912).

15. In 1986 ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salam al-Tadmuri prepared an annotated abridgment of the Chronicle, based solely on Cheikho's edition: *al-Muntakhab min tarikh al-Manbiji* (Tarablus, 1986).

16. For Annas and Caiaphas, see Matt. 26:57–67 and Acts 4:6.

17. Perhaps a reference to 1 Macc. 1:8, where they are called *paides* ("boys"), a term that can also mean "slaves."

18. Alexander the Great departed Egypt for Persia in 331 BC and defeated Darius that same year, at the battle of Gaugamela.

19. Alexander died in 323 BC.

20. Lit. Ptolemy the son of the hare. The manuscripts all either read *arīb* or lack points. One should read *arnab* or "hare" (in Greek "lagos").

21. The successors of Alexander: Ptolemy I Soter, i.e., Ptolemy Lagides (d. 283 BC), Philip III Arrhidaeus (d. 317 BC), Antigonus I Monophthalmus (d. 301 BC), with his son Demetrius I Poliorcetes (d. 283 BC), and Seleucus I Nicator (d. 281 BC).

22. There is no antecedent to the demonstrative. In this and the preceding paragraph the author may be rather carelessly abridging his source.

23. Seleucus was put to flight by Antigonus and arrived to Ptolemy in 315 BC.

24. The manuscripts all read *qabla dhālika* ("before that"), which is difficult to construe, in that Seleucus defeated Demetrius and regained Babylon after he had fled to Egypt and joined forces with Ptolemy. I have tentatively emended the text to read: *baʿd dhālika* ("after that").

25. At the battle of Gaza, in 312 BC.

26. A notable feature of Agapius's text is its attribution of the beginning of the Seleucid era to 5,197 from Creation. This is an unusual date. Later Syriac authors sometimes associate it with later Greek authorities, carefully distinguishing it from the dates calculated by other, more famous authors (Eusebius, Africanus, Jacob of Edessa, etc.). At other times they associate it explicitly with Theophilus of Edessa—an astrologer and historian who flourished in the eighth century and served at the caliphal court in Baghdad. For Theophilus, see Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle*; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1997), 400–409, 631–71, and *CMR* 1: 305–8 (Herman G. B. Teule). For the association of 5,197 with Theophilus, see Ernest A. W. Budge, trans., *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj Bar Hebraeus* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 40; Harald Suermann, *Die Gründungsgeschichte der Maronitischen Kirche* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 209; Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle*, 19–20. Elsewhere in his Chronicle, Agapius made heavy use of the chronicle of Theophilus—a historical work that covered the years 590 CE to 750 CE. While this work is now lost, parts of it have been reconstructed through citations in later sources, including the chronicles of Theophanes and Dionysius of Tellmahre, as well as that of Agapius. It may be that Agapius is dependent on Theophilus's Chronicle for his calculation of the beginning of the Seleucid era. Alternatively, Agapius may have used an astrological work by Theophilus, perhaps one with an extended discussion of chronographic canons, the age of the world, its eras, and the like. For some examples of such literature, cf. David Pingree, "The Byzantine Version of the 'Toledan Tables': The Work of George Lapithes," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 30 (1976): 85–132.

27. By "western kings," Agapius means the Ptolemies, while the eastern kings are Persians.

28. Lit. *bayt ḥikma* or "house of wisdom," a term that evokes the legendary House of Wisdom of the early ʿAbbasid caliphs, which, too, was devoted to the collection and systematization of the Hellenic sciences.

29. Many of the terms used here (*waḥy, nuzūl, nabī, amr, nahy, ḥudūd*) are characteristic of Muslim discussions of prophecy and revelation.

30. We are probably meant to imagine gold dust or powdered gold mixed with gum arabic and used as ink.

31. Gen. 10:24, 11:12–13 LXX.

32. Dan. 9:24–25.

33. Dan. 9:22, 25.

34. This dense paragraph serves to introduce the theological topics to be discussed in what follows.

35. The disruption to the text, here and in what follows, must either be authorial or very early, as it is found in all of the manuscripts. The poor state of the text continues, until the anonymous bishops begin to explain to Constantine the meaning of Daniel's prophecy.

36. No indication is given as to who these bishops are. Perhaps they were introduced in the now-lost sections of the narrative.

37. One expects to find a description of the bishops' arrival. Again the text seems disrupted.

38. Above, the discovery of the differences between the Septuagint and the Hebrew occurred through Constantine's efforts, with no mention of these bishops.

39. Jer. 25:12.

40. Dan. 9:2.

41. Cf. Dan. 9:23–26.

42. In what follows Agapius or his source is summarizing Theodoret of Cyrus's discussion of the "weeks" of Christ, either directly or possibly through an intermediate source. See Robert C. Hill, ed. and trans., *Theodoret of Cyrus: Commentary on Daniel* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 245–53. Agapius is abridging his source considerably, so much so that essential elements of Theodoret's argument are omitted. For instance, Theodoret requires that the years of the weeks of Christ be understood as lunar not solar, such that Daniel's 483 years are actually equivalent to 469 years. This 469-year period, Theodoret continues, begins with Artaxerxes's twentieth year and ends with the final years of Christ's life. In summarizing Theodoret's argument, Agapius preserves his understanding of the week's beginning and end but omits any discussion of solar and lunar years, with the result that his discussion of the beginning and end of the weeks of Christ is incoherent. Or again, Theodoret considers Daniel's division of the weeks of Christ into "seven weeks and two and sixty weeks" to be significant, with Daniel's sixty-two weeks correlating to the slaying of Hyrcanus (the end of the Jewish priesthood) and Herod's assumption of the throne (the end of Jewish kingship). Agapius follows his source and in the appropriate place mentions Hyrcanus and Herod. But once again he omits essential elements of Theodoret's argument, including the discussion of Daniel's division of the weeks of Christ and that division's correlation to Hyrcanus and Herod. Overall, the closing portions of Agapius's "Septuagint Complex" resemble somewhat a rough draft or lecture notes more than a polished literary composition.

43. Dan. 9:23, 24.

44. Dan. 9:2.

45. Dan. 9:25.

46. Dan. 9:26.

47. Dan. 9:2 and Jer. 25:12.

48. Agapius means the captives described in the first chapter of Daniel. They were taken captive in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign but required a year to reach captivity.

49. These would be those who went into captivity in Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-first year, when he destroyed the Temple. They too are being allotted a year for travel to Babylon.

50. Neh. 2:1–6.

51. John 2:20.

52. Agapius uses the word *sibṭ* (normally meaning "tribe") in the meaning of the Syriac *shaḇṭā* (and Hebrew *shēḇeṭ*), i.e., scepter.

53. Gen. 49:10.

54. Apart from its introductory sentence ("The following offers a detailed presentation . . ."), the following list of kings is omitted in A and has here been supplied from B. It may be noted that the list assigns the beginning of the "weeks" of Christ to the first year of Artaxerxes's reign, whereas above Agapius specifies that the weeks are to be counted from the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem (i.e., the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, with

twenty-five years remaining in his reign, that is, ca. 450 BC). The corresponding portion of Theodoret's commentary turns on Daniel's 483 years being interpreted as lunar years and thus equivalent to 469 solar years.

55. Here and below, the glosses in parentheses belong to Agapius.

56. Ptolemy Philip is the same person as Ptolemy I Soter. The error stems from Agapius's source, as it is an ancient confusion. See Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Significance of Yavneh and Other Essays in Jewish Hellenism* (Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 136; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 19.

Chapter 6: Sulayman al-Ghazzi

1. Most manuscripts of his works refer to him as "Sulayman ibn Hasan," while the oldest manuscript calls him "Sulayman ibn Basila."

2. Paul Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, 996–1021* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2009).

3. Ibid., 205–13; Marius Canard, "al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh," in *EI2* 3: 76–82.

4. Marius Canard, "La destruction de l'Église de la Résurrection par le calife Hâkim et l'histoire de la descente du feu sacré," *Byzantion* 25 (1965): 16–43 [reprinted in his *Byzance et les Musulmans du Proche Orient* (London: Variorum, 1973), Essay XX].

5. *CMR* 2: 727–41 (Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala); Samir Khalil Samir, *Foi et culture en Irak au XIe siècle: Elie de Nisibe et l'Islam* (Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1996).

6. Johannes den Heijer and Paolo la Spisa, "La migration du savoir entre les communautés. Le cas de la littérature arabe chrétienne," *Res Antiquae* 7 (2010): 63–72. For a general overview of the philosophy of the Brethren of Purity, consult Godefroid De Callataÿ, *Ikhwan al-Safaʾ: A Brotherhood of Idealists on the Fringe of Orthodox Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006).

7. For a discussion of Christian Arab poets, cautiously refer to Louis Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya qabl al-Islām* and *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿd al-Islām* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1999). On ʿAdi ibn Zayd in particular, see Theresia Hainthaler, "ʿAdī ibn Zayd al-ʿIbādī: The Christian Poet of al-Ḥīra and His Poem no. 3 Written in Jail," *Parole de l'Orient* 30 (2005): 157–72; Joseph Horovitz, "ʿAdi ibn Zeyd, the Poet of Hira," *Islamic Culture* 4 (1930): 31–69; Kirill Dmitriev, "An Early Christian Arabic Account of the Creation of the World," in *The Qurʾan in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾanic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth et al., 349–87 (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

8. Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 170.

9. Qus and Aswan are cities in Upper Egypt that have historically had large Christian populations. For the history of Qus in the Middle Ages, see Jean-Claude Garcin, *Un Centre Musulman de la Haute-Égypte Médiévale: Qūṣ* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 1976).

10. This was suggested by the fifth-century writer Theodoret of Cyrrhus (*PG* 80: 165–68) and before him by Theodore of Mopsuestia, as well as some Rabbinic sources. See Yonatan Moss, "The Language of Paradise: Hebrew or Syriac? Linguistic Speculations and Linguistic Realities in Late Antiquity," in Markus Bockmuehl and Guy G. Stroumsa, *Paradise in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Views*, 120–37 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

11. Here Sulayman does not refer to the Maronites' historical heresy of Monotheletism, but instead seems to accuse them of the quasi-Islamic belief that Christ was purely fleshly, even if he was God's son. As is the case with references to the Maronites elsewhere in his works, Sulayman seems to be unclear as to the precise nature of their heresy and prefers to use them as a polemical stand-in for Muslims. See Harald Suermann, "Sulaymān al-Ġazzī, évêque melchite de Gaza (XIe siècle): Sur les Maronites," *Parole de l'Orient* 21 (1996): 189–98.

12. Cf. John 1:1–2.
13. Cf. John 1:14.
14. Cf. Exod. 14:9–29.
15. Cf. Num. 10:11–13.
16. Cf. Exod. 13:21.
17. Cf. Exod. 17:1–6.
18. Cf. Exod. 40:12–15.
19. Cf. Josh. 1.
20. Cf. Josh. 10:13–14.
21. Cf. 1 Kings 6:1 and 2 Chron. 2:7–10.
22. Cf. John 9:1–7.
23. Cf. Luke 17:11–19.
24. Cf. John 6:1–14.
25. Cf. John 5:1–9 and Matt. 9:1–8.
26. Cf. John 9:1–7.
27. Cf. Luke 8:2.
28. Cf. John 2:1–12.
29. Cf. Matt. 8:5–13.
30. Cf. John 4:16–19.
31. Cf. Matt. 14:25–32.
32. Cf. John 11:1–44.
33. Cf. John 12:1–8.
34. Cf. John 13:1–11.
35. Cf. John 19:18.
36. Cf. Acts 1:9–11.
37. John 19:34.

Chapter 7: ʿAbdallah ibn al-Fadl al-Antaki

1. Hugh Kennedy, "Antioch: From Byzantium to Islam and Back Again," in *The City in Late Antiquity*, ed. John Rich, 189–98 (London: Routledge, 1992).

2. Samuel Noble and Alexander Treiger, "Christian Arabic Theology in Byzantine Antioch: ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī and His *Discourse on the Holy Trinity*," *Le Muséon* 124.3–4 (2011): 371–417, here 375–76.

3. Sibylle Ihm, ed., *Ps.-Maximus Confessor, Erste kritische Edition des sacro-profanen Florilegiums* Loci communes (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001).

4. In this way, Ibn al-Fadl could be compared to the great thirteenth-century Syriac author and polymath Bar Hebraeus.

5. Noble and Treiger, "Christian Arabic Theology," 380n33.

6. Indeed, the first questions discussed in the *Dialogue between a Saracen and a*

Christian, traditionally attributed to John of Damascus and in any case one of the earliest accounts of Muslim-Christian theological debate, are the questions of human free will and of whether God is the cause of evil. On this dialogue, see *CMR* 1: 367–70 (Peter Schadler).

7. It might still be significant that the subject of astrology comes up in Muslim-Christian debates of the time. See Samir Khalil Samir, "La réfutation de l'astrologie par Élie de Nisibe," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 43 (1977): 408–41 [repr. in his *Foi et culture en Irak au XIe siècle: Élie de Nisibe et l'Islam* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), Essay X].

8. Paul Sbath, *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologétiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens du IXe au XIVe siècle* (Cairo: H. Friedrich, 1929), 131–48. The manuscripts are Sbath 43 (year 1766; currently at the Vatican) and Sbath 1569 (year 1452). Unfortunately, this second manuscript is now lost (cf. Samir Khalil Samir, "Un traité inédit de Sawīrus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ [10e siècle]: *Le Flambeau de l'Intelligence*," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 41 (1975): 150–210, here 180n2).

9. The first of these, the eighteenth-century Beirut MS ar. 503 (pp. 55–71 / fol. 29r–37r) is not given in the standard inventories of the manuscripts of this treatise.

10. Georg Graf, "Die Widerlegung der Astrologen in philosophischer Betrachtungsweise," *Orientalia* 6 (1937): 337–46.

11. A ninth-century translation of this work into Arabic was prepared by Hubaysh ibn Hasan al-Dimashqi and partially revised by the celebrated translator Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d. 873). See Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 3: 106–8.

12. *Nicomachean Ethics*, II.1, 1103a. This passage is apparently being cited not directly from Aristotle, but from Nemesius of Emesa, *De Natura Hominis*, chap. 39, from which Ibn al-Fadl also borrows some of the context.

13. Neither the printed edition nor the Arabic manuscripts that I was able to check are satisfactory here. The translation is corrected based on the Greek.

14. This division of agents into those from nature, those from craft, and those from thought (*dianoia*) is found in *Metaphysics* Z.7, 1032a17–28 and E.1 1025b22. It is also used implicitly in *Physics* II. I am grateful to Matteo di Giovanni for pointing this out to me.

15. This discussion is in fact not found in Book III of Aristotle's *Physics* or anywhere else in the *Physics* for that matter. Ibn al-Fadl seems to be relying here on an as-yet-unidentified commentary or epitome of Aristotle.

16. This lengthy passage is a translation of much of chapter 39 of the *De Natura Hominis* by the fourth-century bishop of Emesa (Homs), Nemesius: Moreno Morani, ed., *Nemesii Emeseni De Natura Hominis* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1987), 112–13. Early on, this work came to be attributed to Nemesius's near contemporary Gregory of Nyssa, and thus nearly all medieval authors who quote him (including Thomas Aquinas and, here, Ibn al-Fadl) do so with this attribution. The same passage was also copied exactly, without attribution, by John of Damascus in his *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*: Bonifatius Kotter, ed., *Die Schriften von Johannes von Damaskos* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1973), 2: 96–97.

17. Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names*, IV, 19; Beate Regina Suchla, ed., *Corpus Dionysiacum I: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita* De Divinis Nominibus (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), 163. Although Ibn al-Fadl here translates these quotations directly from the Greek, *On the Divine Names* IV.18–35 was also translated into Arabic as an independent treatise by the protospatharios Ibrahim ibn Yuhanna al-Antaki, ca. 1000. The entirety of the *Divine Names* was also translated into Arabic, albeit poorly, in Syria in the year 1009. See Alexander Treiger, "New Evidence on the Arabic Version of the Corpus

Dionysiacum," *Le Muséon* 118 (2005): 219–40, and Cécile Bonmariage and Sébastien Moureau, "*Corpus Dionysiacum Arabicum*: Étude, édition critique et traduction des *Noms Divins* IV, §1–9," *Le Muséon* 124.1–2 (2011): 181–227 and 124.3–4 (2011): 419–59.

18. Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names*, IV, 19; ed. Suchla, 163.

19. Matt. 7:18.

20. Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names*, IV, 19; ed. Suchla, 163.

21. This is from Basil the Great's *Second Homily on the Hexaemeron*; see Stanislas Giet, ed., *Basile de Césarée: Homélies sur l'Hexaéméron* (Sources Chrétiennes 26; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1968), 158. Ibn al-Fadl translated all of Basil's *Homilies on the Hexaemeron*, to which he appended copious scientific comments of his own.

22. Reading *fa-yataḍādd* instead of *fa-yuḍādd*.

23. Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names* IV, 22; ed. Suchla, 170.

24. The words *tabṭulu al-siyāsa* ("providence is abolished") added here in Sbath's edition seem out of place and are indeed absent in the three manuscripts consulted. Therefore, they are omitted in translation.

25. Emending *taḥarrukuhu min ghayr mutaḥarrik* to *taḥrīkuhu min ghayr taḥarruk*.

26. I am unable to identify the exact source of this quotation. However, it is a synthesis of two proofs for the existence of God commonly found in the Graeco-Arabic philosophical tradition. The first is the proof from motion for the existence of God as Prime Mover, which is based on Aristotle's *Physics* VIII.8 and *Metaphysics*, Book Lambda. On this tradition see, e.g., Richard Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion: Theories in Antiquity and Their Sequel* (London: Duckworth, 1988), chap. 15, 249–85. The second proof is derived from Aristotle's argument in *Physics* VIII.10 that the Prime Mover cannot be a body. This argument was developed into an argument for the Cause of all existent things being bodiless, first by Proclus, and then by John Philoponus, whence it entered the Arabic philosophical tradition. See Herbert A. Davidson, "The Principle that a Finite Body Can Contain Only Finite Power," in *Studies in Jewish Religion and Intellectual History Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Siegfried Stein and Raphael Loewe, 75–92 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1979), and Herbert A. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 89–95, 244, 409–11.

27. Following the reading in Beirut MS ar. 503, fol. 34v.

28. Once again the quotation is in fact a paraphrase of Nemesius of Emesa. Cf. *On the Nature of Man*, chap. 43; ed. Morani, 129.

29. Ibn al-Fadl is referring back to the as-yet-unidentified citation given at note 26 above.

30. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 38* (On Theophany), §9; Claudio Moreschini, ed., and Paul Gallay, trans., *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 38–41* (Sources Chrétiennes 358; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1990), 120. Here Sbath's text (*fī hādhā l-maʿnā ʿalā sabīl al-īḥāʾ*) is obviously corrupt and has no basis in the manuscripts. The three manuscripts consulted all have the reading *fī ʿaqlihi dhātahu faqaṭ*, which is followed here.

31. The intellectual background to this rather complicated discussion of motion in God, from Proclus up to Basil the Lesser and Ibn al-Fadl is analyzed in detail in Marwan Rashed, "La classification des lignes simples selon Proclus et sa transmission au monde islamique," in *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia nella tradizione araba*, ed. Cristina D'Ancona and Giuseppe Serra, 257–79 (Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2002) (repr. in Rashed, *L'Héritage aristotélicien: Textes inédits de l'antiquité* [Paris: Belles Lettres, 2007], 303–

25). A critical edition of Basil's commentary has now been published: Thomas S. Schmidt, *Basilii minimi in Gregorii Nazianzeni orationem XXXVIII commentarii* (Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca 46; Corpus Nazianzenum 13; Turnhout: Brepols, 2001); the passage occurs there at 66–69; cf. also Thomas S. Schmidt, "A Misunderstood Passage in Gregory Nazianzen's *XXXVIIIth Oration* (*De Nativitate*)?" *Studia Patristica* 40 (2006): 275–80 and Schmidt, "Les commentaires de Basile le Minime: Liste révisée des manuscrits et des éditions," *Byzantion* 70 (2000): 155–81. It is also noteworthy that Ibn al-Fadl's older contemporary Euthymius the Athonite (d. 1028) translated Basil the Lesser's commentary into Georgian.

32. The Arabic text seems to diverge here from the original Greek, which explains the spiral motion as a combination of the divine *proodos* (procession) and *stasis* (remaining in place).

33. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 40* (On Baptism), §5; *PG* 36, 364B:7–8.

34. *Homily 6 on Matthew*; *PG* 57, col. 61. All of John Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew* were also translated by Ibn al-Fadl into Arabic in their entirety.

35. On Ibn al-Fadl's theory that God is a universal "secondary" substance, which is one "as a species" of which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are particular instances, see Noble and Treiger, "Christian Arabic Theology," 382–83, 387, and chap. 3 of the *Discourse on the Holy Trinity* (text and translation); Samuel Noble, "The Doctrine of God's Unity according to ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī," *Parole de l'Orient* 37 (2012): 291–301.

36. Isaac the Syrian, *Homily 57* [Collection I, Homily 58 in East-Syriac numbering] ("On those who live near to God and pass all their days in the life of knowledge"), Dana Miller, trans., *The Ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian* (2nd ed.; Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 2011), 423: "[T]he virtues are interwoven with sorrows. He who flees afflictions most certainly separates himself from the virtues also. If you desire virtue, surrender yourself up to every kind of suffering"; cf. Arent Jan Wensinck, trans., *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1923), 275. This homily does not seem to be included in Ibn al-Fadl's own translation (prepared from the Greek) of Isaac the Syrian's homilies.

37. Now lost in the original Greek, a summary of Galen's *On Ethics* was translated into Syriac by Hunayn ibn Ishaq and thence into Arabic by Hubaysh. See Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, 3: 105; Richard Walzer, "New Light on Galen's Moral Philosophy," *Classical Quarterly* 43 (1949): 82–96 [repr. in his *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1962), 142–63].

Chapter 8: *The Noetic Paradise*

1. This is provable on philological grounds. Some preliminary observations have been offered by David Günzburg, "Manuscrits Arabes, Coptes etc.," in *Les manuscrits arabes (non compris dans le n° 1), karchounis, grecs, coptes, éthiopiens, arméniens, géorgiens et bâbys de l'Institut des Langues Orientales*, ed. David Günzburg et al. (St. Petersburg, 1891 [repr. Amsterdam: Celibus N.V., 1971]), 69.

2. A critical edition and a complete English translation of the *Noetic Paradise* are in preparation by the present author. A thirteenth-century abridgment, prepared by the Copto-Arabic author al-Safi ibn al-ʿAssal, was apparently published by a certain Andraʾus al-Antuni in Cairo in 1912.

3. David Günzburg, who was the first to speak of the text's likely Palestinian origin,

suggests the monastery of Mar Saba in the Judean desert as a likely milieu for both the Greek original of the *Noetic Paradise* and its Arabic translation. See Günzburg, "Manuscrits arabes," XIV and 69–70. While it is quite probable that the Greek original of the *Noetic Paradise* was written at Mar Saba or some other Palestinian monastery, its Arabic translation was more likely produced in the region of Antioch after the Byzantine reconquest, as argued below.

4. Another example of an apparently Palestinian work cited in the *Noetic Paradise* is the collection of the sayings of Egyptian monks, called *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* or *Apophthegmata Patrum*. It is quite striking that, other than Gregory the Theologian (cited in chapter 9), Palestinian and Sinaite authors and works are the *only* patristic references cited by name in the *Noetic Paradise*. This would hardly seem possible in a text written outside the Palestinian milieu.

5. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Aryeh Kofsky, *The Monastic School of Gaza* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 42.

6. The death date of John Climacus is not known with certainty. I tend to accept the later, seventh-century dating. Reportedly, Anastasius of Sinai (ca. 630–ca. 700) came to Mount Sinai shortly after 649, when John Climacus was still alive; see *CMR* 1: 193–202 (André Binggeli), here 193.

7. Sebastian Brock, "Syriac into Greek at Mar Saba: The Translation of St. Isaac the Syrian," in *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present*, ed. Joseph Patrich (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 201–8. A critical edition of the Greek translation of Isaac has now been published: Marcel Pirard, ed., *Abba Isaak tou Syrou Logoi Asketikoi, kritike ekdosi* (Mount Athos: Iviron Monastery, 2012). So far no specifically "Isaacian" themes have been detected in the *Noetic Paradise*, but the subject deserves a close examination.

8. This seems likely on stylistic grounds.

9. Louis Cheikho ("Catalogue raisonné des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Orientale, V. Patristique," *Mélanges de l'Université St. Joseph* 11 (1926): 191–306, here 202 [296]), has even suggested that the *Noetic Paradise* itself was translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Fadl. To judge from a preliminary comparative examination of Ibn al-Fadl's translations and the *Noetic Paradise*, this would seem unlikely, but this remains to be explored further.

10. Gen. 3:24.

11. Gen. 3:18.

12. *Macarian Homilies* (Collection I), Homily 2, §3.1–3, in Makarios/Symeon, *Reden und Briefe: Die Sammlung I des Vaticanus graecus 694 (B)*, ed. Heinz Berthold, 2 vols. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973), 1: 5 (this homily was clearly an important source for the author of the *Noetic Paradise*, as his interpretation of the cherub with the flaming sword shows; moreover, even the expression "noetic paradise" seems to originate from this homily, §§2.9 and 3.2); Anastasius of Sinai [?], *Hexaemeron*, ed. and trans. Clement A. Kuehn and John D. Baggarly (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2007), Book VIIb, §§V.8–VII.5, 260–71; John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, chaps. 25 [II.11] and 44 [II.30], in *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, ed. Bonifatius Kotter (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1973), 2: 72–73 and 104–5; Nicétas Stéthatos, *Opuscules et lettres*, ed. Jean Darrouzès (Sources Chrétiennes 81; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1961), 156–58. See also Andrew Louth, *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 131–32.

13. Columba Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart: The Messalian Controversy*

in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

14. Sebastian Brock, "The Imagery of the Spiritual Mirror in Syriac Literature," *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 5 (2005): 3–17. On the influence of this tradition on Islamic theology, see Alexander Treiger, "Al-Ghazali's 'Mirror Christology' and Its Possible East-Syriac Sources," *Muslim World* 101.4 (2011): 698–713.

15. This is, incidentally, also the oldest manuscript of the apology of Agathon of Homs, translated in chapter 9 below.

16. For a Russian translation of the same selection, see Alexander Treiger, "*Umnyj Raj*: Mistiko-asketicheskij traktat v arabskom perevode" [*The Noetic Paradise*: A Mystical and Ascetic Treatise Preserved in Arabic], *Simvol* 58 (2010): 297–316.

17. Cf. 1 Pet. 3:4.

18. Luke 9:62.

19. Matt. 5:48.

20. John 1:18.

21. Luke 21:15.

22. Matt. 10:20.

23. John 14:12.

24. John 15:5.

25. 2 Cor. 13:3.

26. Cf. 1 Cor. 14:37.

27. Cf. Matt. 15:18.

28. Luke 15:24.

29. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:18ff.

30. Luke 14:26.

31. Cf. Matt. 13:22.

Chapter 9: Agathon of Homs

1. This disability was common in the Middle East in pre-modern times (as we also learn from the Gospel: Matt. 12:9–14, Mark 3:1–6, Luke 6:6–11).

2. This is Sinai ar. 483, copied by the priest Yusuf ibn Barakat from the village of Qalhat near the present-day monastery of Balamand in northern Lebanon. An earlier manuscript, supposedly from the year 1128, reported in Sbath's *Fihris*, probably never existed.

3. There is strong evidence that he knew Greek, as would only be natural if he grew up in Antioch. For example, when he cites the Dionysian corpus, he does not rely on the existing Arabic translation of the text (which dates to 1009) but evidently translates the text himself from the Greek original. See note 26 below.

4. As plausibly argued by Metri Haji-Athanasiou, "Agathon de Homs: Exposé sur la foi et sur le mystère du sacerdoce," 2 vols. (PhD diss., Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, 1975), 1: 17, before his ordination Agathon had probably been a layman, rather than a monk. I am deeply grateful to Mr. Rudi De Groot (Centrale Bibliotheek, K.U. Leuven) for a copy of Haji-Athanasiou's dissertation.

5. The subject of priesthood is only rarely taken up in Christian writings in Arabic. One (possibly contemporary) example is the Jacobite author Yahya ibn Jarir (d. 1103/4), who devotes one chapter in his theological encyclopedia *Book of the Guide* (*Kitab al-Murshid*) to the subject of priesthood. On this chapter and its author, see William Cureton, *The Thirty-First Chapter of the Book entitled The Lamp that Guides to Salvation* (London:

Williams and Norgate, 1865); *CMR* 3: 280–86 (Herman G. B. Teule and Mark N. Swanson). On the Syriac side the anonymous "Discourse on Priesthood" offers an interesting comparison. See Adam H. Becker, "The Discourse on Priesthood (BL Add 18295, fol. 137b–140b): An Anti-Jewish Text on the Abrogation of the Israelite Priesthood," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 51.1 (2006): 85–115.

6. Some of these subjects betray an Islamic context. For example, Agathon's treatment of Biblical anthropomorphisms is to be understood against the backdrop of Islamic attempts to deal with anthropomorphisms in the Qurʾan. Unlike Muslim (as well as Jewish) exegetes, who often felt uncomfortable with anthropomorphisms in their Scripture, Agathon embraces them as a proof of the core Christian doctrine, contested by Muslims (and Jews): the doctrine of the Incarnation. Agathon's interpretation of Biblical anthropomorphisms strikes me as very original. It is, for instance, quite different from the two chapters on Biblical anthropomorphisms in John of Damascus's *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* (chaps. 11–12), where anthropomorphic descriptions of God are *contrasted with* rather than related to the Incarnation.

7. See notes 23 and 26 below. Cf. Haji-Athanasiou, "Agathon de Homs," 1: 21–22, who puts Agathon in the context of eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantine writings on the deposition and resignation of bishops. A closer comparison between Agathon's apology and these writings is an important task that cannot be undertaken here.

8. Mahlon H. Smith, *And Taking Bread: Cerularius and the Azyme Controversy of 1054* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1978); Mikhail Chel'tsov, *Polemika mezhdu grekami i latinianami po voprosu ob opresnokakh v XI–XII vekakh* [The Polemic between the Greeks and the Latins on the Question of the Azymes in the 11th–12th Centuries] (Saint Petersburg: Tip. F. G. Elkonskago, 1879).

9. The translation follows the earliest manuscript of the text (Sinai ar. 483), with certain corrections based on the only other known manuscript (Oxford, Huntington 240, in Haji-Athanasiou's transcription of it). Though the Sinai manuscript is older by four centuries and is, on the whole, the more reliable of the two manuscripts (especially in how it treats Biblical and other citations), it has a long lacuna, filled by the Oxford copy. Six excerpts are translated below, as follows: Excerpt A: MS Sinai ar. 483, fol. 357r–359v (ed. Haji-Athanasiou, "Agathon de Homs," 2: 2–7); Excerpt B: MS Sinai, fol. 360r–361r (ed. Haji-Athanasiou, ibid., 8–11); Excerpt C: lacking in MS Sinai (ed. Haji-Athanasiou, ibid., 23–25); Excerpt D: MS Sinai, fol. 364v–365v, 368r–369r (ed. Haji-Athanasiou, ibid., 39–40, 46–48); Excerpt E: MS Sinai, fol. 369r–v (ed. Haji-Athanasiou, ibid., 48–49); Excerpt F: MS Sinai, fol. 374v–375r, 377v–378r, 379v–380v (ed. Haji-Athanasiou, ibid., 58–59, 63–64, 67–69). All subtitles have been provided by the translator.

10. One word is unclear in the manuscript.

11. The Oxford manuscript offers a slightly different version of the title: "Explication of the Faith and of the Glory of Priesthood, this being the Apology of Iliyya ibn al-Ashall, named Agathon, the metropolitan of Homs, over his resignation from the episcopate and termination of his pastoral duties." It is only from the caption of the Oxford manuscript that we learn that Agathon's name as a layman was Iliyya (Elias).

12. Ps. 76:6 / 75:6 LXX. It is not entirely clear why Agathon cites this verse. Perhaps he means that if perchance any extraneous considerations were involved in his election, God will bring them to naught.

13. Rom. 2:12.

14. Gregory the Theologian (329/30–ca. 390) was forced to abdicate as Archbishop

of Constantinople during the Second Ecumenical Council in 381. Earlier, when he was first ordained bishop of the small town of Sasima in Cappadocia, he also left his post to go into seclusion. He had also fled his post after being ordained priest against his will. See Brian E. Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus* (London: Routledge, 2006), 9, 11–13, 23–24.

15. Anastasius I Patriarch of Antioch (r. 559–70 and 593–98). As far as we know, he did not resign his post, as argued here by Agathon, but was banished by Emperor Justin II in 570.

16. Though both manuscripts give the name as Abraxis [?], the correct reading, as suggested by Haji-Athanasiou, is clearly Narcissus. Narcissus (d. ca. 213) was the bishop of Jerusalem who, in 195, presided over a council that decreed that Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday, regardless of the Jewish Passover. He went into seclusion, following calumny by certain members of his flock. His memory is celebrated on August 7.

17. Deposed, not "excommunicated," as translated by Haji-Athanasiou.

18. In Canon 12 (as opposed to Canon 11) the Greek original of the *Apostolic Canons* actually says "let him be excommunicated" (*aphorizesthō*), rather than "deposed." However, since Agathon uses the same word in Arabic as in Canon 11, which is the term habitually used in Arabic canon law for "deposing," I continue to translate it as "deposed."

19. Luke 6:43.

20. On the development of the canon, see Andrew Louth, *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 253–58.

21. Isa. 26:10 LXX.

22. Nah. 1:9 LXX. This Biblical statement is an important principle in canon law, mentioned already in the *Apostolic Canons*, Canon 25.

23. In his defense of the Patriarch of Constantinople Nicholas IV Mouzalon (patr. 1147–51), the twelfth-century Byzantine theologian Nicholas of Methone likewise stressed that if a bishop resigns his office he does not cease to be a priest; Nicholas Mouzalon's opponents argued the reverse. See Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 81; Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 278. Nicholas of Methone's text is edited by Andronikos K. Dēmētrakopolos, *Ekklēsiastikē bibliothēkē, emperiekhousa hellēnōn theologōn syggrammata ek kheirographōn tēs en Moskhāi bibliothēkēs* (Leipzig: Othōnos Bigandou, 1866), 1: 266–92.

24. Cf. Dionysius the Areopagite, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, chap. 2, 392A: "The goal of our hierarchy is to become similar to and united with God as far as possible."

25. The Arab Orthodox theologian ʿAbdallah ibn al-Fadl (chapter 7) remarks that the Christian life as a whole aims at becoming similar to God, and since philosophy is traditionally defined as becoming similar to God to the degree of human ability, the Christian life is the true philosophy. (This passage is found in ʿAbdallah ibn al-Fadl's still unpublished *Book of Benefit*, chap. 32.)

26. Dionysius the Areopagite, *Celestial Hierarchy*, chap. 12, §1, 292C (interestingly, the same passage from Dionysius is cited by Nicholas of Methone in his defense of Patriarch Nicholas IV Mouzalon; ed. Dēmētrakopolos, *Ekklēsiastikē bibliothēkē*, 279). The Arabic wording of Dionysius's citation in Agathon is different from the existing Arabic translation of the Dionysian corpus (Sinai ar. 314, fol. 251v). This means that Agathon is translating the text himself from the Greek.

27. Ps. 82:6.
28. Lev. 11:44–45, 19:2.
29. Ps. 50:1.
30. Ps. 84:8.
31. Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30.
32. Ps. 82:1.
33. Exod. 7:1.
34. The reading is conjectural.
35. Gen. 3:8–9.
36. Exod. 33:18.
37. Exod. 33:22–23.
38. Exod. 31:18.
39. Exod. 24:10 LXX.
40. Gen. 18:4–5, 8.
41. Gen. 28:12–13.
42. Gen. 32:24–8.
43. The Biblical reference is probably to the Song of Songs. Cf. Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names*, chap. 10, §2, 937B, and see Guy G. Stroumsa, "Polymorphie divine et transformations d'un mythologème: L'*Apocryphon de Jean* et ses sources," *Vigiliae Christianae* 35.4 (1981): 412–34 [repr. in his *Savoir et salut: Traditions juives et tentations dualistes dans le christianisme ancien* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1992), 43–63] for some fascinating parallels to the Dionysian passage in Gnostic and Jewish sources.
44. Ps. 89:14.
45. Cf. Ps. 136:12.
46. Ps. 34:16–17.
47. Ps. 35:2.
48. Acts 13:22.
49. Ezek. 7:22.
50. Ps. 33:11.
51. Cf. Dan. 7:9.
52. Isa. 1:20; Job 11:5.
53. Zech. 4:10.
54. Num. 12:8.
55. Isa. 66:1.
56. Ps. 74:11.
57. Deut. 32:16, 21.
58. Ps. 78:58.
59. Gen. 6:6.
60. Gen. 8:21.
61. Ps. 80:2.
62. Ps. 18:10–11.
63. Ps. 18:11.
64. Ps. 68:17.
65. Gen. 2:23.
66. Gen. 2:19.
67. Gen. 2:24.
68. The text should be emended (*amara nāmūs*[*an*] instead of *amaranā Mūsā*) to allow for the correct meaning, which I am translating here.

69. Gen. 1:26, 28. On the history of the idea that Adam was a prophet, a priest, and a king, see Sergey Minov, "Adam i Eva v sirijskoj 'Pesh'ere sokrovish'" [Adam and Eve in the Syriac 'Cave of Treasures'], *Simvol* 55 (2009): 9–46, here 30–33. As Minov shows, Gen. 2:23–24 is used to demonstrate Adam's prophetic status in many early Christian writers: Theophilus of Antioch (*Ad Autolycum* 2.28); Eusebius of Emesa (*Commentary on Genesis*, ad Gen. 2:23); Epiphanius (*Panarion* 48.6.5–6); and Ephrem the Syrian (*Commentary on Genesis* II.13).

70. Gen. 4:4. 71. Gen. 8:20.

72. On Melchizedek in Arab Christian literature and iconography, see *GCAL*, 1: 204–5; Christfried Böttrich, *Geschichte Melchisedeks* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2010), 19–21, 123–25; Gertrud J. M. van Loon, "Priester van God de Allerhoogste: Iconografische en iconologische aspecten van de ontmoeting van Abraham," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 53.1–2 (2001): 5–29.

73. Ps. 110:4; cf. Heb. 5:6, 10, 6:20, 7:17, 21.

74. Gen. 14:18.

75. The argument that *Christian* priesthood in general (and not just Christ's own priesthood) is "after the order of Melchizedek" and hence uses bread and wine ties Agathon's treatise to the period after the Great Schism (1054). In this period Byzantine polemic against the Latins (e.g., Leo of Ohrid's letter to John of Trani and Nicholas of Methone's *On the Azymes*) made frequent use of the figure of Melchizedek: since Melchizedek presumably offered *leavened* bread to Abraham and since Christian priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek, Christians, too, must be using leavened bread in the Eucharist. Significantly, the image of "Christ the Priest" becomes a prominent iconographic theme in cathedral decoration in the mid-eleventh century and also in connection to the Great Schism. See Alexei M. Lidov, "Byzantine Church Decoration and the Great Schism of 1054," *Byzantion* 68 (1998): 381–405, esp. 389–95.

76. It is worth pointing out that this phrase became the focus of a Christological controversy in Byzantium in the mid-twelfth century (1156–57), in which Nicholas of Methone and other theologians defended (against Soterichos Panteugenos) the view, presented here by Agathon, that Christ is both He who offers and He who is offered in the Eucharistic sacrifice.

77. Luke 24:50–51; John 20:22–23.

78. Canon 2 (not 1) of the "Sixth Council," more properly of the Quinisext Council in Trullo in 692, indeed reaffirms the validity of previous canons.

79. The reference is probably to chapter 13 of Justinian's *Novella CXXIII* (On ecclesiastical matters); the numbering of chapters may have been different in the Greek or Arabic of the text used by Agathon.

80. Canon 14 of the Quinisext Council in Trullo indeed prohibits anyone younger than thirty to be ordained priest.

81. Haji-Athanasiou, "Agathon de Homs," 2: 145n1 helpfully provides a reference to "Canon 3 of the first series of canons of St. Basil." Since the statement in question has no correspondence with the more famous *Canons of St. Basil* in use in the other Orthodox Churches (= Basil's Letters 188, 199, and 217), this must refer to a series of fourteen canons, ascribed to Basil in the Arab Orthodox tradition. See *GCAL*, 1: 606; J. B. Darblade, *La collection canonique arabe des Melkites (XIIIe–XVIIe siècles): Introduction* (Harissa: Imp. de St. Paul, 1946), 150–53 (not seen); Joseph Nasrallah, "Dossier arabe des œuvres

de saint Basile dans la littérature melchite," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 29 (1979): 17–43, here 34–35.

82. 1 Tim. 3:1–4.

83. 1 Tim. 3:5.

84. Matt. 22:14.

85. Matt. 10:12–13.

86. Isa. 26:20.

87. Another possible reference to Muhammad occurs in Sinai ar. 483, fol. 375v (ed. Haji-Athanasiou, 61): "It is now obvious from the statement of the Lord [Matt. 7:15, on false prophets] that not everyone who is called a prophet is really a prophet, and one should not accept him without a proof, but only if his actions and ways conform to his title and if his conduct is the same as the conduct of the righteous prophets of old."

Chapter 10: Paul of Antioch

1. *GCAL*, 2: 72–78; Samir Khalil Samir, "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien: Auteurs chrétiens de langue arabe; Būlus ar-Rāhib al-Anṭākī (fin XIIe–début XIIIe siècle)," *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976): 232 [46]–236 [50]; *HMLÉM*, III/1: 257–69; Jean-Marie Gaudeul, *Encounters & Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History*, 2 vols. (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica, 2000), 1: 187–90.

2. See Paul Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche:* Évêque *de Sidon (XIIe s.)* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1964); 2nd ed., *Paul d'Antioche: Traités théologiques* (Würzburg: Echter, 1994). Ten treatises attributed to Paul of Antioch that had been published singly in earlier diplomatic editions were collected in Louis Cheikho, *Vingt traités théologiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens (IXe–XIIIe siècles)* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1920), 1–68.

3. See Max Horten, "Paulus, Bischof von Sidon (XIII. Jahrh.): Einige seiner philosophischen Abhandlungen," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 19 (1906): 144–66; Georg Graf, "Philosophisch-theologische Schriften des Paulus al-Râhib, Bischofs von Sidon," *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und speculative Theologie* 20 (1906): 55–80, 160–79.

4. A partial English translation, with commentary, of Paul's *Treatise to the Nations and the Jews* is available in Herman Teule, "Paul of Antioch's Attitude towards the Jews and the Muslims: His *Letter to the Nations and the Jews*," in *The Three Rings: Textual Studies in the Historical Trialogue of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Barbara Roggema, Marcel Poorthuis, and Pim Valkenberg, 91–110 (Leuven: Peeters, 2005).

5. Editions of the Arabic text have been published in Louis Buffat, "Lettre de Paul, évêque de Saïda, moine d'Antioche, à un musulman de ses amis demeurant à Saïda," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 8 (1903): 388–425, along with a French translation; Cheikho, *Vingt traités*; and Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, with a French translation. A Spanish translation has recently appeared: Diego R. Sarrió Cucarella, "Carta a un amigo musulmán de Sidón de Pablo de Antioquía," *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 4 (2007): 189–215. An English translation of selected passages appears in Gaudeul, *Encounters & Clashes*, 2: 271–75.

6. See Samir Khalil Samir, "Notes sur la 'Lettre à un musulman de Sidon' de Paul d'Antioche," *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 24 (1993): 179–95.

7. See Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Idrīs al-Qarāfī, *Al-ajwiba al-fākhira ʿan al-asʾila al-fājira fī l-radd ʿalā l-milla l-kāfira,* ed. Majdī Muḥammad al-Shihāwī (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1426/2005).

8. See David Thomas, "Paul of Antioch's *Letter to a Muslim Friend* and *The Letter from Cyprus*," in *Syrian Christians under Islam*: *The First Thousand Years*, ed. David Thomas, 203–21 (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

9. See Teule, "Paul of Antioch's Attitude," 94–95. Teule uses this same lack of Latin influence or presence in Sidon in the eleventh century to suggest that Paul could have flourished in the second half of that century, but he does not take the Muslim response to Paul's *Letter to a Muslim Friend* into account in this connection, along with the similar lack of Latin presence in the thirteenth century. Crusaders occupied Sidon between 1110/11 and 1187, as Teule points out.

10. See Thomas, "Paul of Antioch's *Letter*," and Rifaat Ebied and David Thomas, eds., *Muslim-Christian Polemic during the Crusades: The Letter from the People of Cyprus and Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī's Response* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

11. See Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*, 4 vols. in 2 (Jidda: Maktabat al-Madanī, n.d.); English translation in Thomas F. Michel, *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya's al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1984) and al-Dimashqī's *Response to the Letter from the People of Cyprus* in Ebied and Thomas, *Muslim-Christian Polemic*.

12. In the first half of the thirteenth century, "Franks" were in authority in southern Italy, in the Kingdom of Sicily, under the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (1194–1250), who in 1228 had captured Jerusalem and was crowned king of the Holy City in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Often at odds with the pope, Frederick was protective of the Greek Orthodox churches in southern Italy; he was also considered to be tolerant of Jews and Muslims. See David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). On the ecclesiastical situation, see Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni 1081–1261* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), esp. "Exile 1204–1261," 505–63.

13. See in particular the discussion of these matters in Thomas, "Paul of Antioch's *Letter*," and Ebied and Thomas, *Muslim-Christian Polemic*.

14. Paul quotes from the Qurʾan, or alludes to Qurʾanic passages, some sixty-four times in the letter, citing or referring to thirty-two *sura*s: 1–7, 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20–22, 26, 29, 32, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 42, 49, 57, 61–62, 66, 68, 90, and 109.

15. Gaudeul, *Encounters & Clashes*, 1: 189.

16. See Thomas, "Paul of Antioch's *Letter*," 205, 207, 210, 213.

17. Qurʾan 3:85.

18. Qurʾan 12:2, 20:113.

19. Qurʾan 14:4.

20. See Arne A. Ambros, *A Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2004), 28–29.

21. Qurʾan 62:2.

22. Qurʾan 32:3.

23. Qurʾan 42:7.

24. Qurʾan 36:6.

25. Qurʾan 26:214.

26. Qurʾan 3:85.

27. Qurʾan 21:91.

28. Qurʾan 3:42.

29. Cf. Qurʾan 3:47, 19:20–21.

30. Qurʾan 3:49, 5:110.
31. Qurʾan 4:171.
32. Cf. Qurʾan 4:158.
33. Qurʾan 3:55.
34. Qurʾan 57:27.
35. Qurʾan 22:40.
36. Qurʾan 57:25.
37. Qurʾan 36:20–21.
38. Qurʾan 61:14.
39. Cf. Qurʾan 3:3. Paul has considerably reworked the language of this passage.
40. Qurʾan 10:94.
41. See Jean-Marie Gaudeul, "Textes de la tradition musulmane concernant le *tahrif* (falsification) des écritures," *Islamochristiana* 6 (1980): 61–104.
42. Qurʾan 2:2.
43. See Keith Massey, "Mysterious Letters," in *EQur*, 3: 471–77.
44. Qurʾan 3:184.
45. Cf. Qurʾan 2:2.
46. Qurʾan 42:15.
47. Qurʾan 109:1–6.
48. Qurʾan 29:46.
49. Cf. Qurʾan 29:46.
50. Cf. Qurʾan 7:148; Exod. 32.
51. Cf. Matt. 23:29–35. See Gabriel S. Reynolds, "On the Qurʾan and the Theme of Jews as 'Killers of the Prophets,'" *al-Bayān* 10 (2012): 9–34.
52. Ps. 106:37–38.
53. The term Paul uses here is the Qurʾan's term for Christians, *al-naṣārā,* which according to the prevailing opinion of scholars actually means "Nazoreans" or "Nazarenes." The Qurʾan never uses the name "Christian."
54. Qurʾan 5:82.
55. Paul of Antioch was undoubtedly aware that in early Islamic, anti-Christian polemical texts, one sometimes finds the argument that the term *al-naṣārā* (Nazarenes) in the Qurʾan does not refer to the contemporary Christians, such as the "Melkites" (Arab Orthodox), "Jacobites," or the "Nestorians," but to individual Christians in the Qurʾan's milieu who were Islamically respectable, such as the monk Bahira or Salman al-Farisi, and those, as the Qurʾan has it, who say, "We are *al-naṣārā*" (Qurʾan 5:82). See, e.g., Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ, "*Min kitābihi fī radd ʿalā l-naṣārā,*" in *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 4 parts in 2 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khābakhī, 1399/1979), 311–12.
56. Cf. Qurʾan 5:82.
57. Qurʾan 22:17 conflated with Qurʾan 32:25. Note that Paul here reverses the Qurʾanic order in the list of the religious groups, viz. "the Sabeans, the Christians . . .."
58. Qurʾan 2:62.
59. Qurʾan 49:13.
60. The term here translated "apostles" is the distinctly Qurʾanic term for Jesus' apostles, *hawariyyun*, in all probability reflecting the cognate Ethiopic term for apostles. See Ambros, *Concise Dictionary*, 308; Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾan* (Baroda, India: Oriental Institute, 1938), 115–16. The term was also widely used by early Arab Christian writers.

61. Qurʾan 5:112–15.

62. Qurʾan 4:171.

63. The Qurʾan actually says, "none of the People of the Book" in this passage.

64. Qurʾan 4:159.

65. The Qurʾan actually says here, "either we or you."

66. Qurʾan 34:24.

67. Qurʾan 1:6–7.

68. The Arabic term here is *al-madhhab*, generally used to indicate the religious doctrine or legal system one follows; Paul's use of the term "the way" echoes the Gospel's reference to Jesus as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Cf. John 14:16.

69. Qurʾan 2:255.

70. Deut. 32:6.

71. Gen. 1:2.

72. Ps. 51:11.

73. Ps. 33:6.

74. Job 33:4.

75. Isa. 40:7–8.

76. Matt. 28:19–20.

77. Qurʾan 4:68.

78. Qurʾan 37:171.

79. Qurʾan 5:110.

80. Qurʾan 4:164.

81. Qurʾan 66:12.

82. Qurʾan 1:1.

83. Qurʾan 17:110. In early Islamic times Muslim scholars discussed at length how best to speak of the ontological status of the divine attributes, God's "beautiful names" as the Qurʾan describes them in this passage. Arabic-speaking Christian apologists were quick to take advantage of this discussion of the divine attributes, arguing, as Paul does here, that only two of them, living and rational, are "essential," in that all the other divine attributes depend on the truth of the predication of these two attributes as a condition of their own possibility of predication. Therefore, the Christian apologists suggested that one might commend the credibility of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Islamic milieu by reasoning that the essential attributes, living and rational, actually refer respectively to God's Spirit and Word. For a discussion of this apologetic strategy, see Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), esp. 92–96.

84. Cf. Gal. 4:4.

85. Cf. Exod. 3:2. The Orthodox Fathers of the Church commonly interpreted the phenomenon referred to in Exod. 3:2 typologically; the fire in the Burning Bush, in which the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses, prefigures the living fire that came into Mary's womb, purifying her and preserving her virginity. See, e.g., Carmel McCarthy, trans., *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron* (Journal of Semitic Studies, Supplement 2; Oxford: Oxford University Press on Behalf of the University of Manchester, 1993), 53.

86. Qurʾan 6:101.

87. Qurʾan 90:1–3. Paul has added the imperative, "Say," to the Qurʾanic text he quotes here.

88. Qurʾan 42:51.

89. Qurʾan 4:157. On this verse, see Todd Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qurʾan: A Study in the History of Muslim Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009); Gabriel S. Reynolds, "The Muslim Jesus: Dead or Alive?" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 72.2 (2009): 237–58.

90. Qurʾan 4:171.

91. Qurʾan 4:171.

92. Qurʾan 19:34. The phrase, "in which they draw distinctions," reflects the text of the Qurʾan quotation as found in the earliest manuscript copy of Paul's Letter preserved in Saint Catherine's monastery in Sinai; see Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, 74 [Arabic], n40. It is an instance of Paul's altering the Qurʾan's actual text, "about which they have doubts," for the sake of a meaning in accord with his argument.

93. Deut. 32:6.

94. Ps. 51:13.

95. Ps. 33:6.

96. Qurʾan 3:55.

97. Cf. Qurʾan 4:171.

98. Qurʾan 5:82.

99. Qurʾan 57:28.

100. Cf. Qurʾan 22:40.

101. Qurʾan 5:114.

102. Cf. Qurʾan 5:115.

103. Qurʾan 68:42.

104. Qurʾan 2:210.

105. See Binyamin Abrahamov, "The *Bi-lā Kayfa* Doctrine and Its Foundations in Islamic Theology," *Arabica* 42.3 (1995): 365–79.

106. Cf. Qurʾan 7:54, 10:3, 20:5.

107. For a discussion of this concept of the two "laws," see Shlomo Pines, "La loi naturelle et la société: La doctrine politico-théologique d'Ibn Zurʿa, philosophe chrétien de Bagdad," in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, ed. Uriel Heyd, 154–90 (Scripta Hierosolymitana 9; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961).

108. Qurʾan 3:42.

109. Qurʾan 1:2 and *passim*.

Chapter 11: Patriarch Macarius Ibn al-Zaʿim

1. All the dates follow the Julian calendar.

2. *GCAL*, 3: 95–97.

3. Georg Graf evaluated Macarius's literary output rather negatively (*GCAL*, 3: 96). Graf's contemporary, the Russian Arabist Ignatij Krachkovskij concurred with Graf in assessing Macarius's literary heritage as "lacking every originality"; see his *Arabskaja geograficheskaja literatura*, in I. Iu. Krachkovskij, *Izbrannye Sochinenija*, 6 vols. (Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1955–60), 4: 687. This negative judgment does not seem to have been challenged until recently.

4. Hilary Kilpatrick, "Makariyus Ibn al-Zaʿim (ca. 1600–1672) and Bulus Ibn al-Zaʿim (Paul of Aleppo) (1627–1669)," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography II (1350–1850)*, ed. Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart, 262–73 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009).

5. Nikolaj Igorevich Serikov, "Slova so skrytym znacheniem: Iz Zapisnoj knizhki Patriarkha Makarija Ibn az-Zaʿima III" [Words with a Hidden Meaning: Excerpts from the *Notebook* of the Patriarch Macarius III Ibn al-Zaʿim], *Khristianskij Vostok* 3 (2002): 297–307.

6. The name of "Dorotheos of Monemvasia" (probably a fictitious figure) was attached to the earlier *Chronicle of 1570*, written in Greek in Constantinople in 1570, when it was published with some additional material in Venice in 1631. On this chronicle and its updates, see Dean Sakel, "Chronicling Ottoman History in the *Chronicle of 1570* in the 18th Century," in *Empires and Peninsulas: Southeastern Europe between Karlowitz and the Peace of Adrianople, 1699–1829*, ed. Plamen Mitev et al., 203–15 (Berlin: Lit, 2010).

7. Sakel, "Chronicling Ottoman History," 206. On the Arabic translations of these two chronicles, see Nikolaj Serikoff, ed., Valerii Polosin, Vladimir Polosin, and Sergei Frantsouzoff, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Christian Arabic Manuscripts, Preserved in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences* (in print), MSS C357 and C358.

8. Classical Greek culture was known in the Arabic-speaking Middle East. The translation movement of the eighth to tenth centuries, which furnished Arabic literature with an enormous body of translated Greek works, did not, however, lead to the creation of any system of teaching Greek to foreigners. Thus, in every case Greek had to be learned individually, and the quality of instruction greatly varied. In the Ottoman period, Greco-Arabic phrasebooks (of which three are extant) provided a major step forward in language instruction, enabling a student who had them memorized to conduct a basic conversation.

9. *HMLÉM*, IV/1: 125–26; correspondence between patriarchs of Antioch and kings of France goes back to Macarius's immediate predecessor, Patriarch of Antioch Euthymius III of Chios (r. 1635–47).

10. For a vivid account of the "catholicization" of the Church of Antioch under Macarius, written from an Eastern Catholic perspective, see ʿAbdallah Raheb, *Conception of the Union in the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (1622–1672): Historical Part*, trans. Nicholas J. Samra (Beirut, 1981), 79–102 (online: http://phoenicia.org/pdfs/orthodox_antioch_union.pdf).

11. MS St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies, B1227, No. 19, fol. 52r–53r. See Serikoff et al., *Descriptive Catalogue*, MS B1227, No. 19. For the Arabic text and philological commentary, see Nikolaj Serikoff, "An 'Unimaginative Compiler': Patriarch Macarius Ibn al-Zaʿīm and His Explanations of the Names of Greek Saints," in *Macaire III Ibn al-Zaʿīm et Paul d'Alep: Relations entre les peuples de l'Europe Orientale et les chrétiens arabes au XVIIe siècle (Actes du Ier colloque international, le 16 septembre 2011)*, ed. Ioana Feodorov, 135–90 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2012).

12. See under July 15 below. In this case, the fact that this translation belonged to earlier Church tradition is demonstrated by its appearance in an Old Church Slavonic glossary, the so-called *Rechi tonkoslovija grecheskago*.

13. On Macarius's commentary on the "basmala," see Serikov, "Slova so skrytym znacheniem."

14. MS St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies, B1227, No. 10, fol. 18r–v and No. 21, fol. 55r–v. See Serikoff et al., *Descriptive Catalogue*, MS B1227, Nos. 10 and 21. For an edition and Russian translation of B1227, No. 21, see Nikolaj Igorevich Serikov, "Iz 'Zapisnoj knizhki' antiokhijskogo Patriarkha Makarija," *Filologicheskie Zapiski* 9 (1997): 174–79.

15. Juliette Rassi, "La première lettre du patriarche Macaire Ibn al-Zaʿim (1648–1672) au roi de France Louis XIV (datée de 19 nov. 1653)." *Parole de l'Orient* 27 (2002): 105–31.

16. The letter is translated here from the partial edition of Antoine Rabbāṭ, "al-Āthār al-sharqiyya fī makātib Bārīs," *al-Mashriq* 6 (1903): 501–2; integral French translation in Antoine Rabbath [Rabbāṭ], *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire du christianisme en Orient (XVIe–XIXe siècle)*, 2 vols. (Paris: A. Picard et Fils, 1905–10), 1: 473–76; cf. *HMLÉM*, IV/1: 125n246.

17. Rassi, "La première lettre," 107–8, 126–27, also mentions a third letter to Louis XIV, containing a lengthy repudiation of Calvinism. In reality, this is an independent treatise against Calvinism, written by Macarius in 1671. Though it was probably commissioned by the French ambassador in Constantinople on behalf of the king of France, it bears no traces of being a letter. It was published by Antoine Rabbāṭ, "al-Ṭawaʾif al-sharqiyya wa-bidʿat al-Kalwiniyyīn," *al-Mashriq* 7 (1904): 766–73, 795–802, and again by Asad Rustum, *Kanīsat madīnat Allāh Anṭākiya al-ʿuẓmā*, 3 vols. (Beirut: Éditions St. Paul, 1988), 3: 67–72; French translation in *Perpétuité de la foi de l'Église Catholique*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 4 vols. in 2 (Paris: [J.-P. Migne], 1841), vol. 2, cols. 1234–48; cf. *HMLÉM*, IV/1: 196–7.

18. Here and below, the original Arabic names of the months are given in parentheses.

19. Macarius's explanation is based on the fact that in Greek the name Symeon sounds similar to the word *sēmeion*, "sign."

20. The name Joshua indeed means "the Lord is salvation." This is, of course, also the Hebrew name of Jesus.

21. Macarius explained this name as a composite of the Greek *aei*, "always," and *athlon*, "struggle." In reality, this seems to be the Syriac name Ithalaha, which means "there is God." On this Saint Aeithalas / Ithalaha, martyred under the Iranian king Shapur II (r. 309–79), see Jean-Maurice Fiey, *Saints syriaques*, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: Darwin Press, 2004), No. 49, 36. Interestingly, Macarius uses the predominantly Islamic term *jihad* with the meaning of "spiritual struggle." He does the same in explaining the name Callinicus (under July 29 below).

22. Macarius mistakenly mentions Callistus (masc.) instead of the martyr Callista (fem.), who is commemorated, together with her brothers Evodus and Hermogenes, on September 1.

23. Exod. 2:10.

24. Macarius mentions the four archangels in connection with the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossae, commemorated on September 6.

25. September 8 is the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos.

26. Both explanations of this name are rooted in the meaning of the Greek word *trophē*, "nourishment." Tasty food could both spoil the child and replenish the stomach.

27. In reality, the name Cyriacus means "[belonging] to the Lord" or possibly "[born] on the Lord's [day]," that is, on a Sunday.

28. Macarius saw in the name Charitina a diminutive form of Charis, which means "grace" and found a corresponding name in Arabic, Nuʿayma, which is a diminutive form of *niʿma*, "grace."

29. The explanation is incorrect. Macarius did not recognize the original meaning of the name, which is "honest" (from the Latin *probus*), and misinterpreted it as a participle from the Greek verb *probainō*, "to advance."

30. Macarius saw in the name Artemius the Greek root *artos*, which means "bread." In reality, the name Artemius means "safe and sound" or "dedicated to the goddess Artemis."

31. Macarius saw here the Greek root *ampelos*, "grapevine." The actual meaning of this name, however, is based on the Latin word *amplius*, "wide."

32. There seems to be no matching saint in the synaxaria for November. However, on November 4, hieromartyr Nicander, bishop of Myra, is commemorated. It is possible that the name of the city of Myra (in the genitive case: *Myrōn*) was confused with the name Myron, which means "anointment with myrrh," hence the explanation.

33. The Greek word *epistēmē* actually means "knowledge." Macarius explained it as "shy" because apparently he saw it as a composite of *epi*, "away," and a derivative of *histamai*, "to stand." This gave "to keep a distance" or "to be shy."

34. *Platanus orientalis*.

35. See J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Balāṭunus," in *EI2*, 1: 989; Nicholas N. Ambraseys and Charles P. Melville, "Historical Evidence of Faulting in Eastern Anatolian and Northern Syria," *Annali di geofisica* 38.3–4 (1995): 337–43, here 340.

36. Ps. 102:6. See Nikolaj Serikoff, "Understanding of the Scriptures: Patriarch Makariyus Ibn al-Zaʿim and His Arab Orthodox Flock (From the Patriarch Makariyus' *Note-Book*)," *ARAM* 12 (2000): 523–31, here 528–30.

37. This saint is unknown. The closest name attested in the synaxaria is Polyeuctus (meaning "desirable"), but there seems to be no Saint Polyeuctus commemorated in November.

38. This name has been explained differently with regard to Saint Hermogenes of Nicomedia (commemorated on September 1).

39. Matt. 16:18.

40. The reading of Macarius's explanation is uncertain. In reality, the name Isidore means "gift of the goddess Isis."

41. Macarius misinterpreted the name as coming from the Greek word *psikhion*, which means "a crumb." In reality, the name Eupsychius means "good-souled."

42. Here again Macarius uses the term *jihad* to refer to spiritual struggle. Cf. his explanation of the name Aeithalas (under September 1).

43. 1 Sam. 1:20.

44. It is unclear which Theodoulos and Tychon are meant here and when the memory of each is celebrated.

45. From here it seems that the names have no connection to the liturgical year and do not follow any obvious order.

46. Gen. 5:29.

47. Gen. 35:18 LXX.

48. Matt. 25:33–34.

49. The text seems corrupt here.

50. The passages in {brackets} are censored in the Arabic text, edited by Rabbath, presumably so as not to antagonize Muslim readers, and are supplied here from his French translation.

51. Georges Goyau, "Le rôle religieux du consul François Picquet dans Alep (1652–1662)," *Revue d'Histoire des Missions* 12 (1935): 160–98; Georges Goyau, *Un précurseur: François Picquet, consul de Louis XIV en Alep et évêque de Babylone* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1942); Hussein I. El-Mudarris and Olivier Salmon, *Le Consulat de France à*

Alep au XVIIe siècle: Journal de Louis Gédoyn, Vie de François Picquet, Mémoire de Laurent d'Arvieux (Aleppo: Ray Publishing and Science, 2009); Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453–1923* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 134–36.

Chapter 12: Paul of Aleppo

Acknowledgments: I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Geoffrey Roper (London, UK) for revising the present chapter and to Fr. Elia Khalifeh (Antioch Centre, Oxford), Dr. Andreea Dunaeva, and Dr. Mihai Ţipău (Bucharest) for kindly advising me on certain philological details.

1. For instance, impressed with the innumerable relics of the saints at the Patriarchate of Moscow, Paul asked his hosts for a list, wondering: "For who could memorize so quickly a thousand names of fragments and relics?"

2. Bernard Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique (Syrie, Liban, Palestine, XVIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1994), 17.

3. For a clear picture of the taxation system in the Levantine provinces during the Ottoman domination, see Kevork Hintlian, "Travellers and Pilgrims in the Holy Land: The Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the 17th and 18th Century," in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land*, ed. Anthony O'Mahony et al., 149–59, esp. 158–59 (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995).

4. Robert M. Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society: An Interpretation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 23–24.

5. Yuwakim ibn Daw' was the first patriarch of Antioch (1580–92) who traveled, in 1581, to Poland and Moldavia for political and financial help. Mitrophanes Kritopoulos, the patriarch of Alexandria who had studied at Balliol College in Oxford, came twice to Wallachia, where he died in 1639 and was buried in the capital, Târgovişte. Patriarch Theophanes III of Jerusalem (1608–44), helped by the prince of Moldavia Radu Mihnea, was able to purchase in 1625 the monastery of Saint Sabas in Palestine, thus conserving its Orthodox character.

6. For an outline of this status, see Arthur John Arberry, gen. ed., *Religion in the Middle East: Three Religions in Concord and Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 1: 299–301.

7. Upon his return home Paul stated: "The fervor [of the people] of these lands towards the foundation of monasteries is very great, and they bequeath to them splendid assets, such as villages, estates, vineyards, gardens, mills, and Gipsy serfs, among others."

8. When elected prince of the United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1851, Alexandru Ioan Cuza found that a fifth of the Romanian lands belonged to the seventy-one monasteries, twenty-five sketes, and fourteen churches whose revenues had been granted to monasteries in the Holy Land and on Mount Athos.

9. See Marcu Beza, *Heritage of Byzantium* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1947), 39–42; Paul Lemerle and Paul Wittek, "Recherches sur l'histoire et le statut des monastères athonites sous la domination turque," *Archives d'Histoire du Droit Oriental* 3 (1947): 411–72; Petre Ş. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos et les Roumains: Recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XIVe siècle à 1654* (Rome: Pont. Institutum

Studiorum Orientalium, 1986); Emanoil Băbuș, Ioan Moldoveanu, and Adrian Marinescu, eds., *The Romanian Principalities and the Holy Places along the Centuries* (Bucharest: Sophia, 2007).

10. This episode is reported on fol. 29v of the Paris manuscript; p. 156 of Radu's edition.

11. Nicolae Iorga, *Byzantium after Byzantium*, English trans. Laura Treptow (Iași, : Center for Romanian Studies, 2000), 28–29.

12. Robert Haddad rightly deplores one Jesuit author's "easy dismissal of the Melkite Patriarch Macarius al-Zaʿim (surely one of the most learned Eastern hierarchs of the seventeenth century) as merely a good preacher who knows nothing of theology or philosophy" (Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society*, 23).

13. Konstantin A. Panchenko, "Pravoslavnye araby—osvedomiteli rossijskogo Posol'skogo prikaza v XVII v." [Orthodox Arabs: Informers of the Russian Department of Embassies in the Seventeenth Century], *Arabskie strany Zapadnoj Azii i Severnoj Afriki (Istorija, èkonomika i politika)* 4 (2000): 307–17, here 308–9, relates that Peter Hristophoros, imprisoned by the pasha of Silistra while traveling to Moscow on a mission from the Patriarch Macarius, was rescued by the Wallachian Prince Mihnea III, at the patriarch's request.

14. A project aimed at a complete Arabic edition and complete French translation of Paul of Aleppo's journal is currently underway at the Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, in cooperation with Russian researchers. An equally important source, in terms of historical data, the journal of the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi has been recently brought back from oblivion in a superb book: Robert Dankoff and Sooyong Kim, trans., *An Ottoman Traveller: Selections from the Book of Travels of Evliya Çelebi* (London: Eland, 2010).

15. Francis C. Belfour, trans., *The Travels of Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch, written by his Attendant Archdeacon, Paul of Aleppo, in Arabic* (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1829–36), 1: vi.

16. As the texts translated below show, Nikon used Macarius's authority to lend support to his reforms. At his behest, Macarius testified, for instance, that making the sign of the cross with three fingers was the original Christian practice of the See of Antioch. Macarius's short treatise on the sign of the cross is translated in chapter 11.

17. The translation includes the following passages: A. Preparation for the Voyage: MS BnF, fol. 1v–2v, 11r = ed. Radu, vol. 22/1: 19–23, 68–69 = tr. Murkos, 12–13 [the last paragraph is absent in Murkos's translation]; B. Sojourn in Constantinople: MS BnF, fol. 15r–19v, 22r–v = ed. Radu, vol. 22/1: 84–103, 116–17 = tr. Murkos, 21, 26–28, 29–30, [absent in Murkos], 35; C. First Sojourn in Moldavia and Meeting with Prince Vasile Lupu: MS BnF, fol. 28r–29r, 32v–34r = ed. Radu, vol. 22/1: 147–54 and 175–81 = tr. Murkos, 42, 46, 53, 54–55; D. The Church of the Three Hierarchs: MS BnF, fol. 34r–35r, 40r–v = ed. Radu, vol. 22/1: 182–91 and vol. 24/4: 461–64 = tr. Murkos, 55–56, 57, 66, 67–68; E. Sojourn in Russia: Moscow: MS BnF, fol. 93v, 95r–v, 127v = tr. Belfour, vol. 1: 259, 263–64, 362–63 = tr. Murkos, 189, 192, 267; F. Meeting Tsar Alexis: MS BnF, fol. 132r–134r = tr. Belfour, vol. 1: 378–85 = tr. Murkos, 276, 278, 280; G. Meeting Patriarch Nikon: MS BnF, fol. 147r–148r = tr. Belfour, vol. 1: 408–10 = tr. Murkos, 297–98; H. Portrait of Tsar Alexis: MS BnF, fol. 161r = tr. Belfour, vol. 2: 32 = tr. Murkos, 329–30; I. Report on a Moscow Church Service and Patriarch Nikon's Views Concerning Icon Painting: MS BnF, fol. 168r, 168v–169r = tr. Belfour, vol. 2: 48, 49–51 = tr. Murkos, 356–58; J. Reform of Liturgical Books: MS BnF, fol. 176v = tr. Belfour, vol. 2: 78–79 = tr. Murkos,

375; K. The Synod Convened by Patriarch Nikon: MS BnF, fol. 180v = tr. Belfour, vol. 2: 85–86 = tr. Murkos, 379–80; L. Moscow Icon Painting: The Portaitissa: MS BnF, fol. 207r, 211v–213r = tr. Belfour, vol. 2: 158–59, 171–74 = tr. Murkos, 438, 446–47; M. Precious Books Copied in Wallachia: MS BnF, fol. 270r–v = tr. Belfour, vol. 2: 342–44 = tr. Murkos, 568–69.

18. See ed. Radu, vol. 22/1, 42–43 and 46–47.

19. See Bernard Heyberger, "Livres et pratique de la lecture chez les chrétiens (Syrie, Liban): XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles," *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditeranée* 87–88 (1999): 209–23.

20. The date given by Paul cannot be accurate, since February 11, 1652 [Julian], was a Wednesday. The correct date must be either Wednesday, February 11, or (more likely) Thursday, February 12.

21. Ps. 51:1.

22. In other places, "May God bring him victory!"—an expression of reverence "regularly affixed to the name of the Sultan" (Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society*, 67).

23. This belief is at least as old as Plotinus (*Enneads* V.8.6, available in Arabic as part of the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*). See Okasha El Daly, *Egyptology, the Missing Millennium: Ancient Egypt in Medieval Arabic Writings* (London: UCL Press, 2005).

24. See Cyril Mango, *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen: I kommission hos Munksgaard, 1959), 149–69; Nancy P. Ševčenko, "Wild Animals in the Byzantine Park," in *Byzantine Garden Culture*, ed. Antony R. Littlewood et al., 69–86 (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), esp. 80.

25. He was one of Vasile Lupu's dignitaries whom he had sent to Jerusalem, at the request of Patriarch Theophanes III (1608–44) to pay a part of the debts of the patriarchate (which in 1640 had presumably reached the amount of 56,000 florins).

26. Lit. "the language of the Wallachians."

27. There are twenty-six rows of geometrical and floral elements in Arabic, Persian, Georgian, and Russian styles, with no two rows identical. Below, the author refers to the threefold twisted stone carving known as "the Brancovan-style girdle," symbolizing both the Holy Trinity and the Three Hierarchs.

28. Ps. 150:6.

29. Ps. 150:1.

30. For comments on wall frescoes showing dancers in Romanian churches, see Marie Golescu, "Danses et danseurs dans la peinture des églises roumaines," *Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen* 23 (1946): 131–41. For the realistic paintings in Romanian churches as reported by Paul of Aleppo, see Carsten-Michael Walbiner's comments in his "Images Painted with Such Exalted Skill as to Ravish the Senses. . .: Pictures in the Eyes of Christian Arab Travellers of the 17th and 18th Centuries," in *La multiplication des images en pays d'Islam: De l'estampe à la télévision (17e–21e siècle)*, ed. Bernard Heyberger and Silvia Naef, 15–30 (Würzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2003).

31. See Ioana Feodorov, "The Unpublished Arabic Version of the Life of Saint Paraskevi the New by Makarios az-Zaʿim al-Halabi: Foreword, Arabic edition, and English translation," *Arabist: Budapest Studies in Arabic* 24–25 (2002): 69–80.

32. *Jarrār*, "one who pushes things," rather than *jazzār*, "tyrant," as proposed by Belfour (1: 410, 2: 49).

33. Both events are also described by Nikon's leading opponent, Avvakum, in his famous *Zhitie* ("Life"). The "Plague Rebellion" against Nikon broke out on August

25, 1654. See Vera Stepanovna Rumiantseva, "Chumnoj bunt 1654g. v Moskve" [The Moscow Plague Rebellion of 1654], *Voprosy istorii* 5 (1980): 182–86, who uses this passage from Paul of Aleppo.

34. In soliciting Macarius's opinion, Nikon was recognizing his expertise in issues connected to Catholic doctrine. As Arthur J. Arberry asserted, "The Orthodox of the see of Antioch have had more intimate contacts—indeed have wrestled more—with the Roman Catholics than any other Orthodox, certainly than the Greeks and Russians" (Arberry, *Religion in the Middle East*, 342). Echoes of this "wrestling" are often present in Paul's journal.

35. According to Acts 11:26.

36. Erroneously copied in all three manuscripts as "from Russian into Greek." The book referenced here is the *Sluzhebnik* (Priest's Service Book), corrected in 1655. See Paul Meyendorff, *Russia, Ritual, and Reform: The Liturgical Reforms of Nikon in the 17th Century* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991), 127–227; Aleksej Afanas'evich Dmitrievskij, *Ispravlenie knig pri patriarkhe Nikone i posledujush'ikh patriarkhakh* (Moscow: Jazyki slavianskoj kul'tury, 2004). Paul uses the term *qundāq* (from Greek *kontakion*, a kind of church hymn) to refer to this book.

37. A recent book by Vera G. Chentsova contains the detailed story of this extraordinary icon, with rich commentary on its history and arrival in Moscow: *Ikona Iverskoj Bogomateri* [The Icon of Our Lady of Iviron] (Moscow: Indrik, 2010), with a French summary, 385–415.

38. All this information is confirmed by contemporary Russian documents. See Chentsova, *Ikona Iverskoj Bogomateri*, 407–8.

39. Cf. Corneliu Dima-Drăgan, *Biblioteca unui umanist român: Constantin Cantacuzino stolnicul* (Bucharest: Comitetul de Stat pentru Cultură şi Artă, 1967), 201. On Nicetas's *Catena on the Psalms*, see references in Mauritius Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–98), 4: 198–99, No. C21; and on the subject more generally, see Gilles Dorival, *Chaînes exégétiques grecques sur les Psaumes: Contribution à l'étude d'une forme littéraire*, 4 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1986–95).

40. Patriarch Nikon invited Ligarides to come to Moscow to assist in his church reforms. Upon his arrival, however, Ligarides became a chief accuser of Nikon at the synod convened against him in 1666–67 (this synod was also attended by Patriarch Macarius during his second visit to Russia). Macarius first met Ligarides in Wallachia. See Philip Longworth, "The Strange Career of Paisios Ligarides," *History Today* 45 (June 1995): 39–45.

41. Lit. "Frankish." See Ioana Feodorov, "The Meaning of *Ifranğ* and *Ifranğiyy* in Paul of Aleppo's Journal," in *Istoria: Utopie, amintire şi proiect de viitor. Studii de istorie oferite profesorului Andrei Pippidi la împlinirea a 65 de ani*, ed. Radu G. Păun and Ovidiu Cristea, 177–88 (Iaşi, 2013).

42. On this book, extant but still unedited, see Tudor Teoteoi, "La tradition byzantine de l'Oracle inédit de Païsios Ligaridis," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 39 (2001): 19–26. The book carries a dedication to the Russian tsar Alexis and interprets Byzantine sources on Constantinople as predictions of a Russian intervention on behalf of the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire. Patriarch Macarius translated this work into Arabic under the title *Book of the Symbols* (*Kitāb al-Rumūz*), integrating sections of it also in his *Book of the Bee* (*Kitāb al-Naḥla*). See *HMLÉM*, IV/1: 90–91; Juliette Rassi-Rihani, "Sources arabes du *Livre de l'Abeille* (*Kitāb al-Naḥlah*) de Makarius Ibn al-Zaʿim," *Parole de l'Orient* 21 (1996): 215–44; Rassi-Rihani, "Le *Livre de l'Abeille* (*al-Naḥlah*) de Macaire Ibn-al-Zaʿim, témoin de l'échange des cultures," *Parole de l'Orient* 32 (2007): 211–57.

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———. "Christian Arabic Bibliography, 1996–2000." *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 58.3–4 (2006): 265–99.

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B. English Translations of Arab Orthodox Texts

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